

J. H. McKeay  
Alma Crabb

Vol. XIV.]

[New Series.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. 17.]

APRIL, 1883.

[No. 4.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS..... Pages 97-128

## THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOLUME XVII.]

APRIL, 1883.

[No. 4.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

APRIL, 1883.

NOTE—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [227] at the side.

A. D. 37.

### LESSON I.—SIMON THE SORCERER.

April 1.

Acts 8. 14-25.



14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John :

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, a that they might receive the Holy Ghost :

a Chap. 2. 38.

16 (For b as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only c they were baptized in d the name of the Lord Jesus.)

b Chap. 19. 2 — c Matt. 28. 19 ; chap. 2. 38. — d Chap. 10. 48.

17 Then e laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

e Chap. 6. 6 ; Heb. 6. 2.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou f hast thought that g the gift of God may be purchased with money.

g 2 Kings 5. 16 ; Micah 3. 11, 12 ; Matt. 10. 8. — f Chap. 2. 38 ; 11. 17.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter ; for thy h heart is not right in the sight of God.

h Prov. 6. 16, 18 ; 11. 20 ; 12. 20 ; Isa. 44. 20 ; Jer. 17. 9 ; Rom. 8. 7 ; 2 Tim. 3. 5.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, i if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

i Isa. 65. 7 ; Dan. 4. 27 ; 2 Tim. 2. 25.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall j of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

j Heb. 12. 15.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye k to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

k Gen. 20. 7 ; Exod. 8. 8 ; Num. 21. 7 ; Job 42. 8 ; James 5. 16.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

The persecution led by Saul of Tarsus only showed the vitality of the Church, and widened the circle of its influence. Hitherto gathered in a single city, it is now scattered broadcast over the land. All along the shores and among the mountains little churches begin to rise, like lights in a dark place. In the alien country of Samaria the labours of Philip were blessed with abundant results, and a multitude were led by faith. When the news of Samaritans among the disciples reached Jerusalem, there were mingled feelings among the believers, some rejoicing at the broadening progress of the way, others alarmed at the breaking down of old walls of separation. Peter and John were sent to look into the work among the Samaritans, and to organize the church if found worthy. They come, and witness the work of grace, and beseech from God the gifts of the Spirit upon it. As the new believers received the power from on high, and with it supernatural manifestations, there was one who saw in all the Spirit's working only the operation of some charm or magical in-

fluence. It was Simon, a great magician, who had bowed before the mightier spell of the cross, and in outward appearance was now a disciple of Christ. He offered money to the two apostles as the price of possessing the same power which they enjoyed of imparting the Spirit unto men. Sternly did Peter thrust aside the offered bribe, and rebuke the presumption of the sorcerer in supposing that God's gift of power could be bought with money. The deed has shown that Simon is no true disciple, but a sinner with the cloak of religious profession. He is bidden to turn from error and seek God's mercy, that he may yet be saved. The two apostles, having admitted the believers of Samaria into full fellowship with the Church, return to Jerusalem, pausing on their journey to present the Gospel in many Samaritan villages. Thus step by step the cause of Christ moves onward toward the conquest of the world.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 14.** The apostles. The body of the apostolate was still united, notwithstanding the persecution by Saul, and they were recognized as the controllers of the Church. **At Jerusalem.** There is an ancient tradition that the apostles had been commanded by the Lord to stay twelve years at Jerusalem. But it is likely that both their stay and their after separation were regulated by the developments of the Gospel. **Samaria.** Originally a city about thirty miles north-west of Jerusalem, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. In the apostolic age the name was applied to the entire middle section of Palestine. **Had received the word.** Through the preaching of Philip, one of the seven (verses 5-13), after he had been driven out of Jerusalem. 1. Persecution cannot prevent, but can only aid, the spread of the Gospel. **They sent.** The establishment of the Gospel in Samaria, among an alien people, and by one not an apostle, was a new departure, doubtless alarming to some conservative minds, and plainly requiring the supervision of the twelve. 2. God opens the way of his truth in advance of human plans. **Peter and John.** The two leaders in the apostolic company, fast friends to each other, and different in temperament and views. 3. Everywhere Peter is represented as a leading spirit, but nowhere as a Pope. 4. In this measure see the importance of unity in the Church of Christ. **15. When they were come.** They came to examine the work, and see if God's hand were in it, to organize the Church, and to bestow the divine gifts in their power. **Come down.** As Jerusalem is on high ground, to almost every other part of the land people were said "to go down." **Prayed for them.** They saw that the work of grace was genuine, and they besought for the converts the same gifts which they themselves enjoyed. They could not impart the Holy Spirit, but they could intercede for its endowment upon others. 3. See the broad, intelligent conception of the Gospel in these apostles. **Received the Holy Ghost.** Not the ordinary grace of conversion

and Christian consciousness of adoption, but the peculiar manifestation of the Spirit, such as was bestowed through the apostles only (except in one remarkable instance, the conversion of Saul); a miraculous influence needed in the foundation of the Church, and ceasing with the apostolic age.

**16. He was fallen.** Though the word *he* is not in the original, yet every reference to the Holy Spirit indicates a person. **Upon none.** They enjoyed the pardon of sins and the consciousness of acceptance, but their Church did not yet have the supernatural power possessed by that in Jerusalem. **Baptized.** Baptism was the outward token of their faith in Christ as their Saviour. **In the name.** Rev. Ver., "into the name." By baptism entering into the service of Christ. **Lord Jesus.** This may indicate that one name only, that of Jesus Christ, was used in baptism; or the names of the Father and the Spirit may be implied.

**17. Laid their hands.** As the outward sign of the impartation of divine power, not by a magic form, but bestowed in answer to prayer and in response to faith. **Received the Holy Ghost.** Thus repeating the miracle of pentecost, though on a smaller scale. Thus upon 4. 9), was established a Church having the same marks of divine power as in Jerusalem. 6. A common love to the Saviour will break down every barrier of hatred and make peace on earth.

**18. Simon.** Not the apostle, but the sorcerer, whose apparent conversion has been related in verses 9-13. He was a famous magician, born in Cyprus, gifted with peculiar powers either through skill or by some psychologic or mediumistic influence; and made men believe that he was an emanation from Deity. There were many such in that age of superstition, partly deceivers and partly deceived. He had seen in Philip a power which was greater than his own, and accepted Christ as a believer in the theory of the Gospel, but not with personal saving faith. **Simon saw.** The effects of the Spirit were visible and manifest to the senses; and Simon perceived that the power of the apostles was higher than that of Philip. **Offered them money.** He had not yet received the power, and, in his existing spiritual condition, could not receive it; but he supposed the apostles to be sorcerers or magicians like himself, with some remarkable powers which had thus far eluded his grasp. 7. How often sinners judge others to be no better than themselves!

**19. Give me also this power.** He wished for a place as high as the apostles, and a power equal to theirs; not desirous of the graces and fruits of the Spirit, but of privilege to impart its outward manifestation. From his conduct, the word *simony* is applied to the crime of buying or selling offices in the Church. **Receive the Holy Ghost.** The article "the" is not in the words of Simon, showing that he had a very confused idea of what the Holy Ghost is.

**20. Peter said.** Not a curse, but a true declaration of Simon's real condition and dan-



ger. **Thy money perish with thee.** "Thy gold and thyself are equally on the way to destruction." **The gift of God.** God gives, but does not sell his blessings; and he gives only to those who are fitted to receive. **May be purchased.** 8. That which is born of love can never be bought.

**21. Neither part nor lot.** Peter sees that Simon's belief is only of the head and not of the heart, and springs from selfish motives. **In this matter.** In the enjoyment of God's grace, the Gospel of Christ. **Heart is not right.** Literally, "straight." Simon's was a crooked heart, which must be changed before Christ could enter it.

**22. Repent.** Not "be sorry for," but "turn from," the true idea of repentance. **Thy wickedness.** A possible sin against the Holy Ghost. **Pray God.** Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "pray the Lord," that is, the Lord Jesus. 9. When we pray to Christ we pray to God. **If perhaps.** The doubt was not as to the power or willingness of God, but as to the depth and sincerity of Simon's repentance. **Thought of thine heart.** A thought is in the mind, but it may proceed from an affection in the heart. **May be forgiven.** Peter, though an apostle, does not presume to forgive sin, but bids the sinner turn to God.

**23. I perceive.** He perceived it by his act and purpose. **Gall of bitterness.** In a condition of evil as bitter as gall itself, the very quintessence of bitterness. **Bond of iniquity.** In a state of sin which binds like a chain. 10. How wretched the condition of a soul out of Christ!

**24. Pray ye to the Lord.** He does not propose to pray for himself, and shows no true repentance, no hatred of sin, and no conviction of his own guilt. **For me.** 11. Many are willing to have others pray for them who will not pray for themselves. **None of these things.** He did not desire to have his sin taken away, but only its dreaded results removed. This gives us little hope for the sorcerer, who was henceforth an enemy of the Gospel.

**25. Testified.** The apostles gave their witness to the truth of the Gospel, and the facts of Christ's life on which its truth depended. **Preached.** Rev. Ver., "spoken." **The word of the Lord.** The Gospel message in general. **Returned to Jerusalem.** To render their report to the mother Church and their fellow apostles. **In many villages.** They tarried, on their way home, to preach in the villages through which they passed, and established churches (see chap. 9. 31) throughout the province. Thus the old enmity of Jew and Samaritan was lost in the love of Christ.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

**Thy heart is not right in the sight of God.** Acts 8. 21.

**OUTLINE.**

- 1. The Spirit Received. v. 14-17.
- 2. The Sorcerer Rebuked. v. 18-25.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M. Simon the sorcerer. Acts 8. 14-25.
- Tu. Simon believing. Acts 8. 5-13.

- W. The baptism of the Holy Ghost. Acts 19. 1-10
- Th. The heart of unbelief. 2 Tim. 3. 1-17.
- F. The heart searched. Psa. 139. 1-12.
- S. The pure heart. Psa. 24. 1-10.
- S. The new heart. John 3. 1.16.

**Time.**—A.D. 37, a few months after the death of Stephen.

**Place.**—The city of Samaria, in central Palestine.

**Connecting Link.**—The preaching of Philip in Samaria.

**Explanations.**—*Now when*—This was after Philip had been preaching at Samaria.—*The apostles*—They stayed at Jerusalem while the rest of the Church was scattered during Saffl's persecution. *Heard that Samaria*—The people of Samaria were not Jews, but were especially hated by the Jews. *Received the word*—The news of the Gospel. *They sent*—Peter and John went to represent the apostles and Church. *Come down*—Words used because Samaria stood on ground not so high as Jerusalem. *Receive the Holy Ghost*—The same power which had come upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. *He was fallen upon none*—The Holy Spirit, a person in the Godhead. *Baptized*—They had been baptized as believers in Jesus. *Simon*—The sorcerer, one who claimed to have a power from God to do miracles and know the future, but was a deceiver. He had professed to believe in Jesus, and had been received into the Church. *Offered them money*—He thought that they were sorcerers, like himself, only possessing greater power. *Give me... this power*—He wanted to be an apostle himself, in having power. *Thy money perish with thee*—Meaning that both Simon and his money were doomed to destruction. *The gift of God*—God gives—but does not sell. *Neither part nor lot*—Not in heart one of God's people; not fit to receive the Holy Ghost. *Repent*—Turn from sin, as well as be sorry for it. *If perhaps*—If not too far gone in sin to repent. *Gall of bitterness*—In a state of sin as bitter as gall itself. *Bond of iniquity*—Fastened by wickedness as a chain. *Pray ye for me*—He did not speak of praying for himself. *Testified*—Borne witness to Jesus by preaching his word.

**LESSON HYMNS.**

No. 193, *New Hymn Book.* L. M.

O Spirit of the living God,  
In all thy plenitude of grace,  
Where'er the foot of man hath trod,  
Descend on our apostate race.

Give tongues of fire and hearts of love,  
To preach the reconciling word;  
Give power and unction from above,  
Where'er the joyful sound is heard.

Baptize the nations; far and nigh  
The triumphs of the cross record;  
The name of Jesus glorify,  
Till every kindred call him Lord.

No. 188, *New Hymn Book.* 6-8s.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire!  
Thou the anointing Spirit art,

Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart;  
Thy blessed unction from above  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

Enable with perpetual light  
The dullness of our blinded sight;  
Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of thy grace;  
Keep far our foes, give peace at home;  
Where thou art guide no ill can come.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. **The Spirit Received**, v. 14-17. In what place was the Spirit received? Were these people Jews? Who were they? What had been said of Samaria in Acts 1. 8? Who first preached the Gospel to these people? v. 5. What was the effect of Philip's preaching? v. 12. Through whom did the Spirit come upon these people? What two things were done by the apostles to give the Spirit? What was the effect of receiving the Spirit? Acts 2. 4. What will the Spirit give to us? John 16. 13.

2. **The Sorcerer Rebuked**, v. 18-25. What is a sorcerer? [See Explanations.] What had this sorcerer done? v. 13. Had he been truly converted? v. 21. What did he propose to the apostles? What did he want, and for what purpose? How did Peter answer him? In what condition did Peter say Simon was? What did he urge him to do? What did he say that God might perhaps do for him? What did Simon say in return? What did the apostles do after this?

#### TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where does this lesson teach—

1. That one may be baptized without being converted?
2. That God only can forgive sin?
3. That forgiveness can be obtained only by repentance and prayer?

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school.) 1. Where was the Gospel planted by Philip? In Samaria. 2. What followed the laying of the apostles' hands on those who had been converted? The gift of the Holy Ghost. 3. How did Simon the sorcerer seek to obtain this power? By buying it. 4. What did Peter say to him? "Thy money perish with thee." 5. What did Peter urge him to do? To repent and seek forgiveness.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The evil heart.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **The Spirit Received**, v. 14-17. How had the Samaritans heard of the Gospel? What help did the Church at Jerusalem send them? What was the purpose of this visit? What was the purport of their prayer? What requirements of the apostles had these believers fulfilled? Acts 2. 38. By what means was the Holy Ghost imparted? Of what was this a sign?

2. **The Sorcerer rebuked**, v. 18-25. Why did Simon covet the power of the apostles? What offer did he make to Peter? What was Peter's rebuke? In what did Simon's offence consist? What state of heart did his offence

show? What remedy did Peter propose? Why was this remedy needed? How did Simon receive the rebuke?

#### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

What is the difference between a false and a true faith?

How only can spiritual power be attained? Why should we be careful about the motives of our actions?

What is the only deliverance from the bonds of iniquity?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

In what city did Philip preach the Gospel? In Samaria? What was the result of his preaching? Many believed in Jesus. Who was among the believers? Simon the sorcerer. What is a sorcerer? One who claims to have power over spirits. At what did Simon wonder? At the miracles which he saw. What apostles were sent to Samaria? Peter and John? What did they ask for the believers? The gift of the Holy Spirit. How did God answer them? By sending down the Holy Spirit. What did Simon covet? Such power as the apostles had. Why did he want this power? That he might make himself rich and great. What did he bring to the apostles? Money to buy the gift of the Spirit. How did Peter rebuke him? "Thy money perish with thee." What truth did Peter tell him? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT]. In what did Simon's sin lie? In seeking his own glory. What did Simon ask Peter to do? To pray God not to punish him. What should he have asked instead? That God would forgive his sin.

#### WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

When are you like Simon? When you pretend to be a friend of Christ to gain something. When you talk about loving God, and do nothing for Him. When you are good only on the outside. When you love self more than Jesus.

#### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

##### The Traits of True Apostles.

#### I. THEIR AUTHORITY.

When the apostles . . . heard . . . they sent.

v. 14.

"God hath set . . . in the Church, first apostles." 1 Cor. 12. 28.

#### II. THEIR UNITY IN SPIRIT.

Peter and John. v. 14.

"How pleasant . . . to dwell . . . in unity." Psa. 133. 1.

#### III. THEIR BREADTH OF VIEW.

When they were come . . . prayed for them. v. 15.

"Into one body . . . Jews or Gentiles.

1 Cor. 12. 13.

#### IV. THEIR DIVINE ENDOWMENT.

Their hands . . . they received the Holy Ghost. v. 17.

"Power . . . the Holy Ghost . . . come upon you." Acts 1. 8.

## V. THEIR UNWORLDLY SPIRIT.

Thy money perish with thee. v. 20.

"Be not conformed to this world."  
Rom. 12. 2.

## VI. THEIR SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

Thy heart is not right. v. 21.

"He that is spiritual judgeth all things."  
1 Cor. 2. 15.

## VII. THEIR ZEAL.

Preached the word in many villages. v. 25.

"Shall be witnesses . . . in Samaria."  
Acts 1. 8.

## ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

## The False Professor of Religion.

1. There may be some professed believers in Christ whose hearts are wrong in the sight of God.
2. The false professor may be correct in outward demeanor, and may appear to many as sincere. v. 13.
3. The false professor unites with Christ's Church for the purpose of earthly gain. v. 18, 19.
4. The false professor is apt to suppose that others in the Church are as corrupt as himself. v. 18, 19.
5. The false professor looks upon Christianity as an earthly institution, and fails to comprehend its spiritual side. v. 19, 20.
6. The false professor is soon or late discovered and unmasked. v. 20, 21.
7. The false professor is without true fellowship with God's people and true sympathy with Christ's work. v. 21.
8. The false professor is in wretchedness and bondage under Satan's power. v. 23.
9. The false professor may find mercy and pardon if he will repent and seek the Lord. v. 22.

## CATECHISM QUESTION.

4. *Wherein doth your soul differ from your body?*

My soul differs from my body in that my body is made of flesh and blood, and will die, but my soul is a spirit, and will live after my body is dead.

A spirit hath not flesh and bones.—Luke 24. 39.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.—Ecclesiastes 12. 7.

Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.—Matthew 10. 28.

## ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

"THE view from that window is a very dull one," I remarked one day to a friend. "I don't agree with you at all," she answered; "the common is beautiful, and you can see so far." I wondered at the answer, but by

and by it struck me that from her point of view she was quite right. Looking out on the same prospect we saw very different things. I saw a flat, monotonous stretch of green, relieved only by a dark, wavy line at the back, with here and there something that might possibly be a distant roof. She saw an undulating common in front, further back a bright little suburb of the town on which the common bordered, and behind all a rich belt of pine woods. She saw, in fact, what was really there in all its beauty; I a mere shadow of it. How was this? The difference lay in my defective sight. The sight being wrong, the view could not possibly be to me what it was to her.

It is a great blessing to have good bodily sight. It prevents mistake, wards off danger, adds to enjoyment, and confers powers for usefulness which cannot belong to those in whom it is lacking. And where the eyesight is radically wrong, not only is much enjoyment missed, but much risk may be run. We read to-day of one who lost a great good and ran into fearful danger.

The persecution that followed on the martyrdom of Stephen had caused the scattering of the Church at Jerusalem. Instead of remaining in one compact body, the believers in Jesus were dispersed abroad. Philip had been a fellow-labourer with Stephen in the work of ministering to the needy. This work was now interrupted, and he was led to minister the word of life to needy souls in Samaria, as well as healing to many who suffered with bodily afflictions. "And there was great joy in the city."

But there was more to come. Perhaps the hearts of the apostles were drawn out with special love to: the Samaritans because the Lord had more than once passed through their country. John 4. 4; Luke 17. 11. Anyhow they were led to send to them Peter and John, that through their means the Samaritans might become partakers of those gifts of the Holy Ghost enjoyed by the Church at Jerusalem, and in no way be left behind their brethren. It must have been a scene of solemn gladness, one which angels beheld with joy and praise, when, in answer to prayer, the Samaritan believers, as the apostles' hands were laid upon them, received the Holy Ghost.

But there was one who looked upon all this with very different feelings. Before the advent of Philip in Samaria, Simon the sorcerer had been a person of great importance. But after Philip's arrival things became different. The words Philip spoke were a gracious message from God. The miracles Philip wrought were not mere wonders, but works of mercy. Simon soon found his in-

fluence on the wane. He could not but recognize the superiority of Philip. But instead of opening his heart to the Gospel message, he seems to have looked upon it, marvel, and to have considered how he could best draw from it some advantage for himself.

It seemed best to attach himself to this new wonder-worker, and gain by alliance what he would never get by rivalry. So, on profession of belief, he was baptized, and continued with Philip.

But when Peter and John came to Samaria another thought presented itself to him. In the signs which followed their prayer and laying of hands on the converts he utterly failed to see the true meaning. To him it was not the Spirit of God coming down, full of grace, into the heart of a believer, and manifesting his presence in the outward signs of wonder and ecstasy. All he saw was a mere marvel, performed by the power of these strangers from Jerusalem. Surely they might share their power with him if he made it worth their while, and then what gain it might bring him!

What made him thus utterly misapprehend the whole matter? Not a defect of sight, but of heart. "Thy heart is not right before God." He had heard the blessed message of salvation; he had heard of the love of God, but he had not surrendered to it. Self kept its central place in his heart, and the great question with him was: how might he win influence, honour, and riches. No wonder his vision was darkened when this great shadow of self intervened between him and every thing.

And so he lost a great benefit. The blessings of forgiveness and cleansing, of peace and joy in God, of present power for service and a bright hope for the future, which had come to the Samaritan believers were not his. "He had neither part nor lot in the matter."

And he ran into fearful danger. To have professedly accepted the Gospel, yet to have merely accepted it for his own ends, was worse than if he had held aloof altogether. To be a witness of the wonders of grace and look upon them as a means of gain was a fearful trifling with the things of God. Thus he was in danger of perishing, along with the perishable riches which he so highly prized.

The warning is not unneeded now. A Christian profession and Christian work are in many places received with respect and with favour. Young people need to beware of the temptation to employ these for worldly and selfish ends, "supposing that godliness is a way of gain." 1 Tim. 6. 5. A lady once

confessed to an old school-fellow that all the profession she had made, and all the good she had tried to do at school, had been simply to please the schoolmistress! No wonder that her heart grew utterly dead and unmoved by the word of God, and unresponsive to the Gospel invitation. The heart must be given up, and then all the beauty and gladness contained in the Gospel will be fully seen and enjoyed and that "good part," once chosen, shall never be taken away. Luke 10. 42.

### BEREAN METHODS.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw a map of Palestine, showing the three provinces of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and indicating Jerusalem, Samaria, and Shechem. . . . The Samaritans, their origin, relation to the Jews, religion, etc. . . . How the Gospel was planted in Samaria. . . . Simon the sorcerer, who he was. . . . Sorcery and magic in ancient times. . . . Is there anything like it at the present time? . . . Simon as an instance of the false disciple. (See Additional Practical Lessons). . . . Peter and John as illustrating true apostleship. . . . Traits of the early Christian Church as here shown: 1. Varied elements; 2. Aggressive; 3. Organized under authority; 4. Divinely endowed; 5. Having some unworthy members; 6. With high standards of character, etc. . . . The practical duties of the lesson; 1. Work for Christ; 2. Pray for the Spirit; 3. Be sincere in serving Christ; 4. Be faithful to convictions; 5. Have a well-founded Christian experience. . . . ILLUSTRATIONS.

The strongest iron is that welded out of composite ores; so the Church of Christ is stronger for its varied elements if they are thoroughly united. . . . The church in Jerusalem was like an electric light shining on high above the city, but not giving light abroad. By the persecution it was divided and scattered, becoming like many electric points, each in a separate place, giving light to all the land. . . . "The gift of God," ver. 20. A child tried to buy some flowers of a boy at a royal garden. He was answered, "My father is a king; he gives; he does not sell." . . . False disciples are no more an evidence of religion being false than counterfeit bills are an evidence that all money is worthless. On the contrary, if there were no good bills, no one would care to make counterfeits.

References. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA OF ILLUSTRATIONS: Ver. 18: Prose, 4945. Ver. 19: Prose, 11046. Ver. 20: Prose, 10622. Ver. 21: Prose, 9386, 9404. Ver. 22: Prose, 4975. Ver. 23: Prose, 2842; Poetical, 1697. Ver. 24: Prose, 2549.

**Primary and Intermediate.**

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *The Open Heart.*  
**INTRODUCTORY.** Print on the board, "Philip-Simon." Make little square for Jerusalem, another for Samaria. Recall the death of Stephen, and tell of the persecution which followed. Believers ran away from Jerusalem to save their lives. Philip went to Samaria—a fine city built on a beautiful hill. Tell of the idol temples in it, and the wicked men there who worshiped Satan himself. Who was Philip? Tell what he did in Samaria, how many people there began to believe in Jesus, and how the wicked Simon was among them.

**SIMON'S HEART.**



Describe Simon—a strange man who knew how to do wonderful tricks which the people could not understand. Describe his dress, hung with little bells and charms, and tell how he pretended to talk to devils, and to do his strange tricks by their power. Make the children understand that he was a *deceiver*, and show how little sins indulged become great chains binding the heart fast. Print "Satan" inside the heart on the board, and teach that Simon thought that this heart, all bound with Satan's chains, was shut tight so that no one could see into it. Was it?

**GOD SEES INTO HEARTS.**

Tell why Simon pretended to believe in Jesus. Philip did such great works that people forgot to admire and praise Simon. Then he thought, "Perhaps I can do these great works too, so that people will follow me again." Show that his sin was not in wanting to do great works, but in wanting to do them so as to make himself great. Tell why Peter and John went to Samaria, and what Simon wanted to do. Explain why the Holy Ghost could not enter Simon's heart as he did the hearts of other believers—because Simon let Satan stay there. God gave Peter power to read Simon's heart as we can read an open book, and he told him to "repent." Teach that all hearts are open to God, and he sees the chains upon them. Ask each child to try to see what chain is upon his heart. Mention sins that children are familiar with, and make several links of a chain, printing "Unbelief" in the first, and showing how all other sins spring from this. Call for Golden Text, and teach that no heart can be right in God's sight which does not open the door for Jesus to come in,

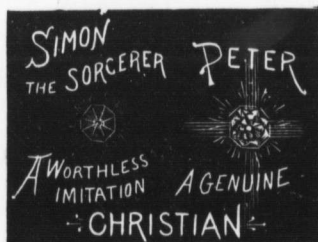
for Satan lives in the heart that has no room for Jesus.

**Lesson Word-Pictures.**

Wonderful days in Samaria, that spot to Jewish thought so hateful! It has its temple at Gerizim, its venerated copy of the law, its passover, its rival worship of Jehovah. O if the burning breath of God would come down, the Jew may have thought, and lightning shatter the Samaritan pretensions! Any now fire has come down! Peter and John are praying in the midst of a circle of Samaritans, and into their hearts flashes that Pentecost-flame which burns away all fences, and Jew and Samaritan bow together in this brotherhood of the Holy Ghost. But who is this coming forward to Peter and John? What curious, credulous eyes, what greedy hands, what an atmosphere of subtle power, not understood, yet felt, and accompanying this man! He is plainly a leader while stealing forward as a suppliant to beg a favour. Ho, did we not see you one chilly night, muffled in your robes, blinking at a cold white star, then scratching cabalistic signs on dirty yellow parchment? Did we not see you in a crowd of gaping, wondering Samaritans, befooling them with your magic? Did you not set all the tongues of Samaria to clattering when you turned your back on the cold stars and the dirty witch-books and came forward to be baptized? Have you not been following Philip with sharp, prying eyes, going from miracle to miracle with an inquisitive awe, wondering how it was done? And now, you pull the apostles' robes, draw them aside, and whisper that devilish offer of gold for the power of the Holy Ghost! Ho, Simon Magus, you are Simon Magus still! You deserve that hot, shattering bolt of rebuke Peter launches at your old, untamed love of witch-power. Less sorry for sin than afraid of its penalty, you mumble out your confession and shuffle away. Little does Peter know what an enemy is slinking off as your shadow is lifted from his path.

**Blackboard.**

BY J. B. PHIPPS, REQ.



Simon the sorcerer became a Christian in show and profession for a time, but he was never a genuine one. The illustration for to-day is intended to show the difference in value between a Christian in form only, and a Christian in heart. One reflects the light of the cross, the other a worthless imitation. This is shown by the drawing on the board of a diamond, and by its side a paste imitation. The spurious one may be much like the true one in form, but when tested it shows very quickly that "it is not right."

A. D. 37.

So Simon the sorcerer deceived many, but in the sight of God he stood revealed a base imposter. Even so will every Christian in show and profession only be judged.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BLESSING.

BY

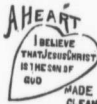
RICHES?  
POWER?  
SCIENCE?  
SELF?  
PRETENSE?

NO.

The Gift of God! YES.

## LESSON II.—PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN.

April 8.



26 And a the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.  
*a* Psa. 91. 11; Heb. 1. 14.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a *b* man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and *c* had come to Jerusalem for to worship,  
*b* Psa. 87. 4; Isa. 43. 6; Zeph. 3. 10.—*c* 1 Kings 8. 41; Psa. 68. 29; Isa. 53. 5; John 12. 20.

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the Scripture which he read was this, *d* He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:  
*d* Isa. 53. 7; Phil. 2. 7, 8.

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speakest the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began *e* at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.

*e* Luke 24. 27; chap. 18. 28; 2 Cor. 1. 20; Col. 2. 17; 1 Peter 1. 11.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what *f* doth hinder me to be baptized?

*f* Chap. 10. 47.  
37 And Philip said, *g* If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I *A* believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.

*g* Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 16.—*A* Matt. 16. 16; John 6. 69; 9. 35; 11. 27; Rom. 10. 10.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Acts 8. 26-46.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, *i* the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.  
*i* 1 Kings 18. 12; 2 Kings 2. 16; Ezek. 3. 12.

40 But Philip was found *j* at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea.  
*j* Zech. 9. 6.

## GENERAL STATEMENT.

Another step in the progress of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-religion was soon made. Samaritans had been baptized, and now a foreigner from a distant land was admitted to membership in the body of Christ. Philip, in hidden by the Spirit to seek a new field of labor on the border of the desert. Without hesitation he obeys the strange command. He bids farewell to the disciples of Samaria, and turns his face southward. He journeys along the foothills of the mountain region, past Jerusalem, past Hebron, and at last stands upon the desert-rolling toward him. As it draws nearer he can see the glitter of arms, and hear the prancing horses and the rattle of wheels. Soon appears bending over a roll of the prophet Isaiah, in which he reads intently. Acting upon an impulse from on high, Philip draws near, and as read, he boldly asks the reader: "Do you Ethiopian bids the stranger sent himself in his chariot, and interpret to him the word. From thoughts toward Jesus, and tells him the Gospel as he listens, and his heart is won to the serualts by its master's command, and in presence of the assembled caravan the Ethiopian treasurer puts on the profession of Christ Jesus by baptism. At the bank the two are suddenly parted, Philip to journey along the shore northward, preaching the Gospel, the man of Ethiopia to travel to the Nile, and up its stream a thousand miles homeward, joyful in his new experience.

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**

**Verse 26. The Angel.** Rev. Ver. "an angel." Visibly appearing, and not in a dream. In those foundation-days of the Church, upon which all history was depending, such supernatural manifestations were to be expected.

**Unto Philip.** One of the seven "deacons," at this time in Samaria, where he had founded the Church. He was apparently a man of hearty, warm nature, prompt to obey the divine call, and faithful in labor. **Go toward the south.** The region south of Samaria, where he then was. **Unto the way.** The particular path is specified, because there he was to meet a particular person. 1. Thus does divine providence both direct the worker and prepare his work. **From Jerusalem.** In reaching this road his most direct course would be west of Jerusalem, along the edge of the Shefelah or low hills. **To Gaza.** The road may have been that through Hebron, which passes along the border of the desert. A very ancient city on the maritime plain the southernmost point of Palestine. It was the scene of Samson's exploits; and still remains a place of sixteen thousand inhabitants. **Which is desert.** The road, not the city, thus described as a direction to Philip. Such a road would give opportunities of private meditation and conversation.

**27. Arose and went.** Though the command, a strange one, was given without a reason, yet the evangelist obeyed it promptly. 2. Those who would do God's work must be submissive to his will. **A man of Ethiopia.** The land south of Egypt, embracing what is now Nubia and Abyssinia. Its people were black, and of large stature. This man was probably a native who had become a worshipper of God, such as were called by the Jews "proselytes of the gate." **An eunuch.** The eunuchs were men who had been mutilated for service in the care of the women of the palace; though the term is often applied to officers in the court. **Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.** This was the title of the queens of Meroe, in northern Ethiopia, as Pharaoh had been that of the kings of Egypt. **Charge of all her treasure.** A position of high trust and responsibility, especially in the East, where the checks upon fraud are few and speculation is common. **Had come to Jerusalem.** A journey of thirteen hundred miles over rough and dangerous roads, and in a heavy chariot, requiring a large retinue and guard. **To worship.** Though a public man, he found time to worship God. 3. An example to all men in business and public life. 4. How much trouble this man was willing to take for the privilege of worship in God's house!

**28. Was returning.** His route lay through the border of the desert to Gaza; thence along the sea-shore to Egypt, thence up the Nile to his home. **His chariot.** A low two-wheeled waggon without springs, open in the rear, with seat for the rider, while the driver stood. **Read Esaias.** The prophet Isaiah.

He may have purchased the roll in Jerusalem, and was now reading it for the first time. 5. The best companion for the traveller is the word of God.

**29, 30. The Spirit said.** By a special inward prompting. But it was also in accord with a sound and intelligent Christian judgment, that here was an opportunity to do good. **Join thyself.** Walk beside the chariot, and seek acquaintance with its occupant. **Philip ran.** Showing promptness and alacrity in obeying the guidance of the Spirit. **Heard him read.** The orientals always read aloud, and with full voice. **Understandest thou.** These words, the only recorded utterance of Philip, contain a pleasant, half-humorous play upon words, which cannot be translated, like, "Do you heed what you read?" 6. He that would win a soul has need of wisdom and tact.

**31, 32, 33. How can I.** Not every nobleman would thus admit his ignorance and ask for guidance. **He desired Philip.** Showing a spirit lowly and teachable, and a sincere interest in the truth. **Sit with him.** That they might more readily converse together. **The place of the Scripture.** No more suggestive place in the world could have been found than this in Isa. 53, about the sufferings and atoning death of the Redeemer, and written seven centuries before the events which it describes. **Led as a sheep.** The picture of the meek and suffering Saviour would at once arise to Philip's mind as he heard these sentences read. **In his humiliation.** In the depth of his abasement. **His judgment.** "Justice was denied him," is the meaning of this clause. **Declare his generation.** "Who will relate his life, thus prematurely cut short."

**34, 35. Answered.** Addressed, or opened the conversation. **Of whom speaketh.** All the earlier Jewish writers regarded this as prophetic of the Messiah; but after the Christian era, perceiving its force as applying to Jesus, they began to adopt other methods of interpretation. **Opened his mouth.** An expression indicating the beginning of a discourse somewhat formal. **Began at the same Scripture.** At the words of the prophet, which pointed directly to Christ. **Preached. . . Jesus.** Literally, "announced the glad-tidings, Jesus."

**36. As they went.** Discoursing of Jesus, of whom the nobleman may have heard during his visit to Jerusalem. **A certain water.** Supposed to be the spring in the Wady el-Hasey, but not with certainty. **See, here is water.** Rather, "See! water!" as if glad at its sudden appearance. **What doth hinder me.** Showing promptness in the acceptance of Christ, and willingness to make a public confession of him. **To be baptized.** Philip must have already explained the Christian system in its ordinances as well as in its doctrines.

**37.** [This verse is omitted in Rev. Ver., not being in the best ancient manuscripts. But its sentiments are in accord with the Gospel.] **Believest.** Having faith, not only in the truth of the Gospel, but in the personal Christ.



**Thine heart.** The saving faith is the assurance or acceptance of the heart, as well as the credence of the mind. **Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** A whole body of divinity in a sentence—the Messiahship of Jesus, his divinity, and, taken in connection with the passage he had been reading, his atoning death.

**38. Commanded the chariot.** At the nobleman's word the entire retinue pauses by the bank of the stream, and all are witnesses of the vow. **They went down.** Descending from the chariot down the steep banks and into the water, the natural and the only way. **He baptized him.** Whether by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion is not stated, as it would have been if the sacred writer deemed the method all important. It cannot be inferred that into the water means under it.

**39. Caught away Philip.** Perhaps by giving a sudden impulse to depart; perhaps the expression suggests but does not demand a supernatural disappearance. **Saw him no more.** He who has the word, an enlightened experience, and a sincere desire for the truth, can dispense with a human guide. **On his way rejoicing.** Not sorrowing at the separation, but glad in his new-found treasure.

**40. At Azotus.** The ancient Ashdod, on the plain by the sea. **Passing through.** Following the line of the coast northward. **Preached in all the cities.** Perhaps Ekron, Joppa, and Lydda, among others. At the last two we find the traces of his presence in the next chapter. **To Cesarea.** South of Mount Carmel, on the plain of Sharon. It was the Roman capital of Palestine. Here, twenty years after, Philip met his old-time persecutor, Saul, now the apostle Paul. Acts 21. 8.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

And he went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8. 39.

#### OUTLINE.

1. Reading, v. 26-33.
2. Receiving, v. 34-38.
4. Rejoicing, v. 39, 40.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M.* Philip and the Ethiopian. Acts 8. 26-40.  
*Tu.* The means of salvation. Isa. 53. 1-12.  
*W.* The way of salvation. John 14. 1-12.  
*Th.* The message of salvation. Mark 16. 1-20.  
*F.* Mercy in salvation. Isa. 55. 1-11.  
*S.* Confession unto salvation. Rom. 10. 1-15.  
*S.* Rejoicing in salvation. Rom. 5. 1-11.

**Time.**—A. D. 37, immediately after the events of the last lesson.

**Place.**—The desert south-west of Palestine.

**Explanations.**—*The angel*—A divine messenger. *Arise*—From Samaria, where he then was. *Unto the way*—The desert-road from Jerusalem south-west. *Arose and went*—Obeying the command, strange as it seemed. *An eunuch*—An officer in the court of Oriental kings. *Came to Jerusalem*—Though a foreigner, he worshipped God. *To worship*—He was going home after a journey of twelve hundred miles. *Read Ecclaias*—The prophet Isaiah. *The Spirit said*—By a divine impulse within his mind. *Join thyself*—Keep close to it. *Philip ran*—Showing

readiness to obey God's voice. *Understandest thou*—He was reading aloud, and Philip saw that he was perplexed. *How can I*—Being a foreigner, and not a Jew. *Desired Philip*—He saw that Philip was intelligent. *The place of the Scripture*—This was Isa. 53. *As a sheep*—So was Jesus led to death. *Judgment was taken away*—That is, no justice was given him. *Declare his generation*—Tell the story of his life, referred to Jesus Christ. *Preached unto him certain water*—A spring or a stream. *Baptized*—Philip had told him that believers in Jesus were baptized in his name. *Believest with . . . heart*—True belief is resting the heart on Jesus as the Saviour. *Jesus . . . Son of God*—No one can truly believe this without trusting in Jesus as his Saviour. *Baptized him*—Thus making him a member of Christ's Church. *Caught away Philip*—He left suddenly, by a divine impulse, or by being taken away bodily. *He went on his way*—The Ethiopian rejoiced, because he had found Jesus. *Passing through*—All the cities on the sea-coast, as those of Joppa and Lydda.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 634, *New Hymn Book.*

C. M.

Father of mercies, in thy word  
 What endless glory shines!  
 For ever be thy name adored  
 For these celestial lines.  
 Here the Redeemer's welcome voice  
 Spreads heavenly peace around;  
 And life and everlasting joys  
 Attend the blissful sound.

Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,  
 Be thou for ever near;  
 Teach me to love thy sacred word,  
 And view my Saviour there.

No. 635, *New Hymn Book.*

C. M.

How precious is the book divine,  
 By inspiration given;  
 Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,  
 To guide our souls to heaven.  
 It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts,  
 In this dark vale of tears;  
 Life, light, and joy it still imparts,  
 And quells our rising fears.  
 This lamp, through all the tedious night  
 Of life, shall guide our way,  
 Till we behold the clearer light  
 Of an eternal day.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

**1. Reading, v. 26-33.** Who was Philip? Where was he sent? Why did this seem a strange command? What is said of the man whom he met? How far had he come to whom? What was he doing when Philip met him? What were the words he was reading? See Isa. 53. 7, 8. To whom did these words refer? What did Philip say to this man? How did the man answer him?

**2. Receiving, v. 34-38.** What did Philip tell the Ethiopian? What was the effect of his preaching? How did the man show faith in Jesus? What is required of those who are bap-



tized? What was the Ethiopian's declaration of faith? What is said in Acts 16. 31? What was done by Philip and the Ethiopian?

**3. Rejoicing**, v. 39, 40. What happened after the baptism? What is said in the GOLDEN TEXT? Why should he rejoice? Rom. 5. 1, 2. Where was Philip found? What did he do!

**TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.**

Where does this lesson show—

1. An example of obedience to God?
2. The benefits of studying the Scriptures?
3. The way to be saved?

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school.) 1. Whom did Philip meet in the desert. An Ethiopian nobleman. 2. What was the Ethiopian doing when Philip met him? Reading the Scriptures. 3. What did Philip say to him? "Understandest thou what thou readest?" 4. What did he ask Philip to do? To show him the meaning. 5. What did Philip then do? He preached Jesus to him. 6. How did the Ethiopian receive Philip's preaching? He believed in Jesus.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—Christ the fulfilment of prophecy.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**

**1. Reading**, v. 26-33. What heavenly message did Philip receive? What personage did he meet? What was the eunuch's business in the land? How was his travelling leisure employed? What divine command came to Philip? How did he greet the eunuch? What proposition did the eunuch make? On what prophecy did he seek light?

**2. Receiving**, v. 34-38. What question perplexed him? How did Philip explain the prophecy? What question of the eunuch showed his assent to the word preached? What was his confession? What followed the confession?

**3. Rejoicing**, v. 39, 40. What occurred after the baptism? What became of Philip?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Where are we shown in this lesson—

1. That scriptural study is a profitable use of the leisure hour?
2. That the Holy Spirit is ready to help the earnest seeker?
3. That prompt faith works speedy relief?
4. That the preached word is the safe remedy for questions of doubt?
5. That opportunity for preaching Christ is open to those who seek it?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Who told Philip where to go next? The angel of the Lord. To what place was he sent? To Gaza, about sixty miles from Jerusalem. Whom did he meet on the way? An Ethiopian nobleman of high rank. What did the Spirit tell Philip to do? To go near the chariot. What was the nobleman reading? The words of Esaias. What did Philip ask him? "Do you understand what you are reading?" What was the reply? "I have no one to teach me." What did he ask Philip to do? To be his teacher. Whom did Philip preach to him? Jesus. How

can we understand the Old Testament? When we know Jesus. What did the nobleman want? To be baptized. What did he believe? That Jesus is the Son of God. What did Philip do? Baptized him in the name of Jesus. Where did Philip then go? To Azotus. What did the new believer do? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT].

**WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.**

Jesus, the Lamb of God, died for us—He is mighty to save. He is willing to save. He says to little children, "They that seek me early shall find me."

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**

**A Sincere Seeker after God.**

- I. A NOBLE SEEKER.  
Of great authority... all her treasure. v. 27.  
"Not many mighty, not many noble." 1 Cor. 1. 26.
  - II. A DILIGENT SEEKER.  
Had come to Jerusalem... to worship. v. 27.  
"From beyond... Ethiopia... bring mine offering." Zeph. 3. 10.
  - III. A STUDIOUS SEEKER.  
In his chariot read Esaias the prophet. v. 28.  
"Search the Scriptures... testify of me." John 5. 39.
  - IV. A HUMBLE SEEKER.  
How can I, except... guide me. v. 31.  
"The meek will guide in judgment." Psa. 25. 9.
  - V. A PRACTICAL SEEKER.  
What doth hinder me to be baptised? v. 36.  
"Arise... be baptised... wash away... sins." Acts 22. 16.
  - VI. A BELIEVING SEEKER.  
I believe... Jesus... Son of God. v. 37.  
"With the heart man believeth." Rom. 10. 10.
  - VII. A REJOICING SEEKER.  
He went on his way rejoicing. v. 37.  
"Rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. 5. 2.
- ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**
- The Winner of Souls.**
1. He that would win souls to Christ must be quick to apprehend and prompt to obey the directions of the Spirit in his work. v. 26, 27.
  2. He that would win souls must watch for them both in the crowd of the city and in the solitude of the wilderness. v. 29.
  3. He that would win souls must be aggressive, not waiting to be asked, but eager to point to the way of life. v. 30.
  4. He that would win souls must be wise and skilful in his methods of approach to souls. v. 30.
  5. He that would win souls must be master

of Scripture, able to see Christ upon every page. v. 35.

6. He that would win souls must guide the inquirer to a direct and personal faith in Christ. v. 37.

7. He that would win souls must be careful to keep Christ in the front, and himself out of sight. v. 39.

8. He that would win souls must sow beside all waters, and everywhere preach Jesus. v. 40.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

5. *Is not your soul then of great value?* My soul is of great value; for it is more valuable than the whole world.

What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—Mark 8. 36.

6. *Did God create anything beside man?* Beside man, God created the heavens and the earth, and all things which are therein. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.—Genesis 1. 1.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.—Heb. 11. 3.

#### ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

THIS world has always been full of seekers, striving to attain various things, in various ways, and with various results. In bygone ages men sought for the philosopher's stone, which would transmute all metals into gold; and for the fountain of youth, which should restore to its pristine vigor the body which was waxing old and decaying. And they sought in vain. For no such stone, no such fountain, existed. Alexander of Macedon sought the empire of the known world. And when he had obtained it he wept because there were no other worlds to conquer. For the thing that looked to him so desirable and so gratifying shriveled into nothing when he had fully grasped it. Columbus, who sought to compass the globe, and to reach India by a new and untried path, found actually something beyond what he sought, for he discovered a new world. But what did the discovery bring him? Slander, persecution, a broken heart. Adventurous travellers have sought to reach Alpine summits, and some have not only failed, but have perished in the attempt. Why? Because they have refused the proper guide, and gone the wrong way.

To-day we read of a very different seeker. *The Ethiopian eunuch sought for a reality.*

He possessed much of what the world prizes. He had rank, authority, and wealth. But he wanted more. There was something within him which craved a higher good. But he sought for no fabled joys; he followed no illusive promises. He sought for the

God to whom all nature bore daily witness, the God of whom he had heard as having erer, defender, and shepherd of his people. He determined—blessed determination—to be satisfied with nothing less than the knowledge of God, because he believed it to be worth all else besides.

*He sought in the right way.*

There have been philosophers who sought to know God. They have sought for him as one whom their reason and understanding could compass, somewhat after the manner of Job, when he said: "Behold I go forward . . . backward . . . on the left hand . . . on the right hand." Job 23, 8, 9. But, as a preacher once observed, "Job, man! you should have looked up." The eunuch acknowledged his impotence, and went to seek for God in the place where he had revealed himself, the city and the temple where he had revealed his name. He took a long and wearisome journey that he might worship at Jerusalem. And when he turned back again, with many a longing yet unstill'd, and many a problem yet unsolved, having found none to guide him, he still continued the search in the right way, in the word which God had given to man. Nor was the search made in secret. All knew what he had come to Jerusalem for, and on his way home, not could have heard him reading the word of God. He was not ashamed to be known as a seeker. And, therefore,

*He found what he sought.*

Some of the sweetest promises in the Bible are to the seekers. "They that seek me early shall find me." "They shall praise the Lord that seek him." "The Lord is good that seeketh him." Prov. 8. 17; Psa. 22. 26; Lam. 3. 25. The Lord saw, noted and promised for this seeker. He sent a guide to the seeker, too, at the very moment when in Old Testament prophecy, that passage which held the key to all he needed to know and all he longed for. The passage was a dark saying to the eunuch. He could see no light in it. Confessing his ignorance, he gladly accepted Philip as guide, and in that self to his soul, as his Redeemer, Substitute, and reconciled Father—as God in Christ, putting their trespasses to them." And having thus found God

*He was satisfied.*

And he was satisfied because what he had sought and found was worth having. In the knowledge of God there was food for his hunger, water for his thirst, light on his

darkness. Again, it could never be exhausted. He had left Jerusalem with its worship, but henceforth his own closet would be to him the "house of God and the gate of heaven." His heart was now

"At the secret source  
Of every precious thing,"

and day after day he could draw from that living fountain. And, once more, it raised him above circumstances. His newly found friend and guide, after admitting him into the visible Church, was suddenly carried away. Yet this could not disturb his gladness. He "went on his way rejoicing" in the presence of the Lord whom he had found, and who had found him.

Would that all would seek what the Ethiopian eunuch sought, would seek as he sought, would not fear to be known as seekers, would not be ashamed to accept guidance, would seek God in Christ, earnestly, diligently, honestly. An old Chinese who had strayed into a hall where missionaries were preaching, heard the message that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Then he told of the soul-hunger which had been gnawing him for years, and how he would look up to the sun and say, "O sun! take this hunger off my heart," and cry to the moon and to the stars, "Take this hunger off my heart;" but in vain. "And now," he said, "now that I have heard this message the hunger is gone!" God in Christ satisfied him; God in Christ will satisfy every seeker.

**BEREAN METHODS.**

**Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.**

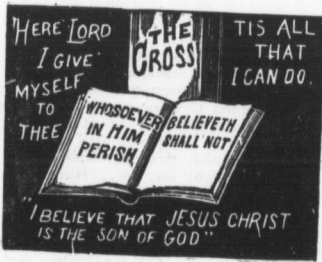
Draw a rough map of Palestine, showing mountain region and sea-coast; locate upon it Samaria, Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza, Joppa, and Cesarea, and trace Philip's journey from Samaria, and the Ethiopian's journey from Jerusalem. . . . Keep in mind, and develop two lines of thought: 1. Philip as the example of a Christian worker. (See Additional and Practical Lessons). 2. The Ethiopian as an example of the sincere seeker after God. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline). . . . What is here taught concerning: 1. The direction of the Holy Spirit? 2. The providence of God? 3. The duty to work for souls? 4. The study of the Old Testament? 5. The profession of faith in Christ? . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. Vers. 26, 27: When William C. Burns offered to go as a missionary to China, he was asked, "When will you be ready to sail?" He answered, "To-morrow." "But you wish to see your mother first?" "No, I can write her a letter; that is the better way." . . .

Vers. 27, 28: A Chinese man in an interior village walked two hundred and fifty miles, carrying a leaf from the New Testament, to find the missionary who could explain it to him. . . . Ver. 35: From every city in the Roman Empire there was a road to Rome; so from every sentence of Scripture to Christ.

**References.** FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Vers. 26-40: Poetical, 3886. Ver. 26: Prose, 6493. Ver. 28: Prose, 6816. Ver. 29: Prose, 10975. Ver. 30: Prose, 402. Ver. 31: Prose, 358. Ver. 35: Prose, 4615. Ver. 37: Prose, 7515. Ver. 38: Poetical, 203. . . . FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 28: Reading aloud, 827.

**Blackboard.**

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The blackboard represents the Bible at the foot of the cross open at one of the precious promises. The thought of the design is to teach that the seeker after Christ should come directly to the foot of the cross claiming the promise, and saying, as did the eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

"Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
'Tis all that I can do."

**Primary and Intermediate.**

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *God Chooses our Work.* To be taught: That the Lord directs his children; that he sends them out to make him known; that great joy comes to those who receive Jesus.

1. Review the last lesson, letting children name the persons and places. Tell of the great number of people in Samaria who loved Philip dearly, because he had taught them to believe in Jesus. But an angel came to tell him he must go away into a desert place. How strange, when he was doing so much good in Samaria, to be sent off into a place where no one lived! Teach that God makes no mistakes, and that if we

just obey him we shall see that all comes out right. Show how necessary obedience is by a child who does not know the way to do a certain thing. What shall he do? Ask some one who knows, and then do as he is told. Who only knows the way for us to speak and act and work? God. Then let us ask him every day, and do just as he tells us.



2. Tell what Philip saw as he walked along alone in the desert. Describe the nobleman, his appearance, the object of his journey, etc. Tell what he was reading, and open the Bible at Isaiah, telling the children that he was reading from the fifty-third chapter. Read aloud the words that he asked Philip to explain, and tell how glad Philip was to find some work to do. Why could Philip tell what these words meant! Tell that as we can see what is inside a dark room only after the light has been put within, so we can only see the true meaning of the Bible after the light of the Holy Spirit has come into the heart. Philip was glad to let the light shine, so that this man who did not know Jesus might see, too. Have we a light in the heart, and do we let it shine?

3. Tell how glad the nobleman was to hear about Jesus, and how he began to obey his words *at once*. How? By believing and being baptized. Call for Golden Text, heart that obeys Jesus. He went home right away to tell his queen and all the people what he had learned, and so Jesus began to be known in Africa. Teach that if we believe God as Philip did, and obey him, he will use us to do some good work for him. Let us ask him every day to lead us, and tell us what to do.

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

One man going toward the south, sent by a strange voice, an angel summons, "Arise and go!" Is it to reach a city? Is it to find a man? There is no explanation. It is a weary way and still the traveller journeys

A. B. 37.

### LESSON III.—SAUL'S CONVERSION.

Acts 9. 1-18.

April 15.



**221** 1 And *a* Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest, *a* Chap. 8. 3; Gal. 1. 13; 1 Tim. 1. 13.

**222** 2 And desired of him letters unto Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. *a* Of the way; Chap. 19. 9.

on. Rough, rocky, hot as it may be, still he continues this strange journey to hunt up, to find—what? There is a dot away off on the rim of the landscape. It grows. "Some one coming!" says the traveller. "It must be horses." He looks again: "I see a chariot." It comes nearer; "I see the driver. There is the driver's master. His face is dark." He wears splendid robes. He is reading." "Go near!" whispers the spirit. Is this the man sought after? There is no explanation. Is the man on foot in dusty robes to approach those princely garments? "Go near" is the word. He runs to the chariot. He hears its owner reading Isaiah. The swarthy stranger hears his question. Does he understand the book? Startled, he looks up. The two, Philip and the eunuch, face one another. As this "eunuch of great authority" does not understand that gospel in Isaiah, will Philip join him and teach him? Side by side, they ride on. Together they look at that scene of the Lamb at an altar. Besides their earnest voices, no sound is heard save the rattling wheels of the chariot. What influence of soul with soul in the close contact of words face to face! What power to the truth preached by a man and sent home by the Holy Ghost! The chariot rolls on. The two men are still talking. The sun may be going down; they heed it not. A storm-cloud like a dark wave may be rolling over the horizon; they only think of that Lamb at an altar. Can that swarthy eunuch serve him now? Can he be baptized to-day? But what is that shining ahead? Water the chariot halts, and then comes the sacrament of baptism. How impressive the scene, the glassy water, the two men standing side by side, the sun looking down from the still, blue sky as if it were the eye of God watching in blessing! It is all quickly over. The two separate. Philip caught away of the Spirit disappears, and rolling on toward the far off south-land that is his home, rides the eunuch. His chariot is again a dot on the horizon and is then lost to sight! The gospel of Christ has gone to the palaces of Ethiopia.

**223** 3 And *b* as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: *b* Chap. 22. 6.

**224** 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

*c* Matt. 25. 40; 1 Cor. 12. 12; Eph. 5. 30.

**225** 5 And he said, *d* Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

*e* It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. *d* 1 Tim. 1. 13.—*e* Chap. 5. 39.

6 And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

f Luke 8, 10; Chap. 2, 37; 16, 30.

7 And g the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

g Dan. 10, 7.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of *h* Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

A Chap. 21, 30.

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints, at Jerusalem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that *i* call on thy name.

i Chap. 7, 59; 22, 16; 1 Cor. 1, 2; 2 Tim. 2, 22.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for *j* he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before *k* the Gentiles, and *l* kings, and the children of Israel:

j Chap. 13, 2; 22, 21; 26, 17; Rom. 1, 1; 1 Cor. 15, 10; Gal. 1, 15; Eph. 3, 7; 1 Tim. 2, 7; 2 Tim. 1, 11.—k Rom. 1, 5; 11, 13; Gal. 2, 7, 8.—l Chap. 25, 22; 26, 1.

16 For *m* I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

m Chap. 20, 23; 21, 11; 2 Cor. 11, 23.

17 And *n* Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and *o* be filled with the Holy Ghost.

o Chap. 22, 12; —o Chap. 2, 4; 13, 52.

18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

While Philip is walking southward along the margin of the desert, another traveller is pressing northward under the snowy heights of Hermon. Saul of Tarsus, having crushed out the Church in Jerusalem, is now hastening to Damascus to devastate the disciples there. During his journey, all too slow for his fiery spirit, his thoughts turn inward upon himself and backward upon the past. He thinks, perhaps, of Barnabas, his former friend, now the hated Nazarene; he thinks of those controversies in the synagogues, where he found no words to answer the arguments in behalf of this new Gospel, but in anger remains unconvinced still; the glowing face of Stephen rises before his eyes, and once more he hears that dying cry of faith and prayer. He

presses down the deep conviction, but it will return in spite of all his resolves. The walls and towers of Damascus are now gleaming under the noontide sun, when suddenly a brighter light flashes in the sky, a Form is revealed to Saul's startled vision, and a Voice stirs the very depths of his being. One moment's look, one sentence spoken, and the current of a life-time is turned backward. Saul falls to earth, no more the enemy, but the humble, submissive seeker after Christ. Three days of agony slowly pass, and then a brother's hand is laid upon his brow, and a brother's voice sounds in his ear, inviting him to peace and faith in Christ. The scales fall from his eyes, and the cloud rises from his heart. Saul receives the token of baptism, and enters the company of disciples, henceforth to give all his mighty energies to the cause of his new master, Jesus Christ.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. **Saul.** The fiery young zealot, whom in Lesson XI, First Quarter, we found leading in the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the Jerusalem Church. He was a native of Tarsus in Asia Minor, descended from pure Jewish stock, of the tribe of Benjamin; of a family possessing the privilege of Roman citizenship. He had been trained in the law under Gamaliel, the greatest Rabbi of that age, and was evidently a leading spirit among the young men of Judaism. **Yet.** Even after the dispersion of the Church at Jerusalem. **Breathing.** The word "out" should be omitted. (Rev. Ver.) As if **threatenings and slaughter** against Christianity were his very atmosphere. **Went unto the high-priest.** Probably Theophilus, a son of Annas, who still held the real power.

2. **Desired of him.** Thus in all this persecution, Saul and not the high-priest was the moving power. **Letters.** Serving as passports for travel and authorization of his acts. As Jerusalem was the centre of the Jewish world, the high-priest was recognized by the law of the Roman Empire as the patron of Jews in all lands, and possessing an undefined power over them. Yet even the high-priest could not have exercised such authority in Damascus as is here indicated but for the fact that there was at that time no Roman Governor in Palestine, leaving the rule in the hands of the Sanhedrin, and also that Damascus was then under the control of the Arabian Aretas, who was a friend of the high-priest Theophilus. **Damascus.** One of the oldest cities of the world, one hundred and forty miles north-east from Jerusalem, on a plain at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. It has ever been the metropolis of eastern Syria, and has now one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. **To the synagogues.** The meeting-places for worship of the Jews, also their centres of rule, since among the Jews Church and State were closely united. **This way.** "The way." (Rev. Ver.) This appears to have been the name by which the Gospel was generally known, both among friends and foes. **Men or**

women. The bitter persecutor did not exempt even women from his wrath. 1. God shows his power and grace in transforming even so violent an enemy into the mightiest of his workers. **Bring them bound.** To receive such treatment at Jerusalem as the murder of Stephen might lead them to expect.

3. **As he journeyed.** There are two roads, either of which he may have taken, one crossing the Jordan north, the other south of the Sea of Galilee, thence following the mountains. It was a journey of five or six days, during which Saul could have time for meditation, and for the workings of his conscience, which thus far he had resolutely repressed. **Came near Damascus.** The city bursts upon the traveler's view with such beauty that it is said that Mohammed, b-holding it, turned away and refused to enter, saying, "Man can have but one Paradise, and mine is not here!" **A light from heaven.** It was noonday, but this light obscured the sun. Acts 26. 13. It was the Shechinah-glory of the heavenly Redeemer, and in it Saul saw the Lord himself. 1. Cor. 15. 8.

4. **Fell to the earth.** From the beast on which he was riding, probably an ass or camel. Horses were used only in war in the East. The vision dazzled his companions also, (26. 14.), but only Saul heard the words spoken. **A voice.** The voice was articulate, not an internal spiritual experience. **Saul, Saul.** He is directly addressed and named. 2. See here the individual notice by the Saviour in heaven of men and events on earth. **Persecutest thou me.** Saul had not driven the nails or spear into Christ's body; yet the Saviour says "me," not "my people." 3. See the deep sympathy which subsists between earth and heaven, between Christ and his Church.

5. **Who art thou.** The question shows that amid all his terror Saul fully retained his consciousness, that he yielded only when convinced, and clearly convinced, that the One who spoke to him was the Son of God. **I am Jesus.** He does not say, "I am Christ," or "I am God," but takes the name which was the object of Jewish hate. Thus Saul can see that the glorious Being above him in the sky is the same with the despised Nazarene. **Hard for thee.** This clause is omitted here in Rev. Ver. But it evidently belongs to the story as related elsewhere; and it shows that after all Saul's conversion was not entirely a sudden work. All through the persecution he had been resisting inward convictions and outward evidences of the truth of the Gospel. He had heard and seen Stephen, and had been worsted in arguments with the disciples in the synagogues. Chap. 6. 9. **To kick against the pricks.** Like an ox, kicking against the goad, Saul had been fighting against the influences of the Spirit through his own conscience.

6. **Trembling and astonished.** (Omitted in Rev. Ver. as not found in the best manuscripts.) In these words he surrenders his own will, and becomes the servant of Christ. **Have me to do.** 4. True repentance does not look

toward the past, but toward the future. **Go into the city.** Damascus. **It shall be told thee.** Led step by step, he was to receive salvation as all receive it, through the instrumentality of a saved man.

7. **The men.** Saul's companions in travel, and subordinates in the work of persecution. We do not know that any of them became disciples. **Stood speechless.** Rooted to the spot, whether standing or fallen down, Acts 26. 14. **Hearing a voice.** They heard a voice, but not *the* voice. (Chap. 22. 9.) What was to Saul a definite utterance, was to them a sound without words. **Seeing no man.** Saul saw a Form, they saw only a blaze of light. 5. Whom the Lord designs for a special work he calls in a special way.

8. 9. **Saul arose.** Henceforth in Christ, and a new creature, with all his mighty energies consecrated to the cause which heretofore he had persecuted to the very death. 6. O the wondrous transforming power of Christ! **Saw no man.** "Saw nothing," (Rev. Ver.) blinded by the dazzling light which had burst upon him. This probably left its effects, "the marks of the Lord Jesus," (Gal. 6. 17.) in a weakness of sight, and perhaps a constant pain of the eyes throughout his life. **Brought him into Damascus.** Probably to a public house, which may have been the place referred to in verse 11. **Three days.** The agony of his mind was so great as to exclude all thought for his body or the business which had brought him to the city, and he was as in a trance, the conditions of his outward life being suspended. Perhaps the visions of 2 Cor. 12. 1-4, took place at this time.

10, 11. **Ananias.** A private member of the Church, unknown but for this event. 7. Christ often uses lowly instrumentalities to accomplish great results. **In a vision.** With a bodily appearance. 8. Christ knows his own by name, however humble. **I am here.** He knew the Lord, and needed not to ask, like Saul, "Who art thou?" **Street.....called Straight.** At that time a magnificent avenue, lined with columns, and a mile long from the eastern to the western gate; now a narrow alley. 9. Notice the precision with which the disciple is directed in the way of duty. **House of Judas.** Perhaps the name of an inn-keeper. **Tarsus.** A city in Cilicia, on the Mediterranean, then one of the largest in the empire; now a town of 20,000 people. **He prayeth.** He had always prayed, but never with the earnestness and directness of his present supplication. 10. He who prays aright will not fail to find answer.

12, 13, 14. **Hath seen in a vision.** While Ananias was receiving a divine message in one place, Saul was receiving a corresponding message in another. **Named Ananias.** This he might know by the same supernatural power as imparted the vision. **Ananias answered.** His answer showed thefulness and freedom of his fellowship with the Lord in venturing to tell all his fears. **Heard by many.** The refugees at Damascus had told of the sufferings of their brethren at Jerusalem.



**Thy saints.** "Thy holy ones." First used here of disciples in the New Testament. **He hath authority.** His coming, then, was known and dreaded by the flock at Damascus.

**15. Chosen vessel.** The term "vessel" is used in the Bible of any implement. Christ saw in the persecutor a weapon of power. **Before the Gentiles.** This was to be Saul's especial mission. **He must suffer.** Saul was ready to do, but he was also to suffer, which is the harder task.

**17, 18. Went his way.** Reassured by the promise. **His hands.** As the token of the impartation of power from one to another. **Jesus, that appeared.** Another evidence that Saul not only heard, but also saw, the Lord. **Filled with the Holy Ghost.** The divine endowment of power, generally given through the apostles, but, in the case of apostles themselves, directly imparted from God. **As it had been scales.** Related with the professional accuracy of Luke the physician, and referring to the substance which had incrustated over his eyes during their inflammation. **Was baptized.** A step of great importance, since it drew the line between his past and his future, separated him from his former friends, and caused him to be recognized as a Christian.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. Acts 9, 18.

**OUTLINE.**

1. Christ's Foe, v. 1, 2.
2. Christ's Call, v. 3-9.
3. Christ's Messenger, v. 10-18.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M. Saul's conversion. Acts 9, 1-18.
- Tu. Paul's story. Acts 26, 1-18.
- W. Christ seen by Paul. 1 Cor. 15, 1-11.
- Th. From darkness to light. Isa. 29, 10-24.
- F. Giving up all for Christ. Phil. 3, 1-14.
- S. The new creation. Rom. 8, 1-17.
- S. The revelation of the Gospel. Eph. 3, 1-13.

**Time.**—A. D. 37, about the same time with the events of the last lesson.

**Place.**—Damascus, in Syria.

**Explanations.**—*Breathing*—So full of hate that it seemed like his breath. *Went unto the high-priest*—His name is supposed to have been Theophilus. *Letters to Damascus*—The high-priest held a certain rule over Jews in all lands. *This way*—"The way" was a name then given to the Christian religion. *Or women*—Even the helpless and gentle women suffered in the persecution. *Bring them bound*—For trial at Jerusalem. *He journeyed*—About one hundred and fifty miles. *Shined round*—A glory from the heavens fell around him revealing God. *Heard a voice*—The voice of Christ. *Persecuted thou me*—Christ felt the wrongs of his people as his own. *Who art thou*—Saul had never seen Jesus. *Kick against the pricks*—To kick against goads, like an ox who will not submit to be driven. Saul was thus fighting against his own sense of duty. *What wilt thou*—He at once submitted to Jesus as a master. *It shall be told*—His duty would be shown, one step at a time. *The men*—Saul's

company. *Hearing a voice*—They heard a noise, and saw a light, but did not see and hear what Saul did. *Saw no man*—Made blind, for the time being, by the vision. *Three days*—Days of sad and deep thought. *Ananias*—Of course not the same with that in chapter 5. *In a vision*—The Lord Jesus appeared to him. *Street called Straight*—A street running through the city of Damascus still. *House of Judas*—How exact the knowledge of Jesus. *He prayeth*—Prays now as never before. *Hath seen in a vision*—Saul and Ananias both had visions at about the same time. *I have heard*—Ananias could scarcely believe that so fierce an enemy had been converted. *A chosen vessel*—The word means here "a tool" or "instrument." *He must suffer*—He who has made others suffer was himself to suffer in Christ's cause. *Scales*—Something like a crust or scaly covering. *Was baptized*—Thus joining himself with the Church of Christ.

**LESSON HYMNS.**

No. 243, *New Hymn Book.*

7a.

Depth of mercy, can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?  
Can my God his wrath forbear?  
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?  
I have long withstood his grace,  
Long provoked him to his face;  
Would not hearken to his calls,  
Grieved him by a thousand falls.

Jesus, answer from above,  
Is not all thy nature love?  
Wilt thou not the wrong forget,  
Suffer me to kiss thy feet?  
If I rightly read thy heart,  
If thou all compassion art,  
Bow thine ear, in mercy bow,  
Pardon and accept me now.

No. 242, *New Hymn Book.*

C. M.

There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day;  
And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.

O dying Lamb, thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Be saved to sin no more.

**QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.**

1. Christ's Foe, v. 1, 2. Who was Christ's foe? What had he done before this? Acts 8, 3. What did he now do? What was his purpose in all this? What did he afterward say of himself in 1 Tim. 1, 13? What is Christ's service called in ver. 2? What kind of a way is this? Heb. 10, 20.

2. Christ's Call, v. 3-9. Whom did Christ call, and where, and when? What did Saul see and hear? What did the Lord say to him? What was Saul commanded to do? What was the effect of the vision upon Saul? How did it affect those who were with him?

How does Christ come to us? How should we receive his call?

**3. Christ's Messenger, v. 10-18.** Who was he, and what was his character? What did the Lord say to him? How did this show the knowledge of Jesus? What did Ananias say about Saul? What did the Lord say that Saul was to be and to do? What took place at the house where Saul was? What was the effect of Ananias' coming? See GOLDEN TEXT.

**TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.**

- Where does this lesson teach—  
1. That Christ can change enemies to friends?  
2. That we should obey Christ's call?  
3. That Christ calls men to work for him?

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school). 1. For what purpose did Saul go to Damascus? To persecute the Church. 2. How was he stopped on the way? By Jesus speaking from heaven. 3. What did Saul say to the voice from heaven? "What wilt thou have me to do?" 4. What was Saul's condition after meeting the Lord? He was three days without sight. 5. By whose hands was he restored to sight? By a believer named Ananias.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—God's converting power.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**

**1. Christ's Foe, v. 1, 2.** How did Saul regard the disciples? In what cause was he zealous? Gal. 1. 13. What authority did he seek, and why? What prompted his mistaken zeal? Acts 26. 9.

**2. Christ's Call, v. 3-9.** What interrupted Saul's journey? How did the vision affect him? What revelation was made to Saul? Wherein had he persecuted Jesus? What question shows Saul's surrender? How did Saul continue his journey, and why? Of what blindness was Saul now rid?

**3. Christ's Messenger, v. 10-18.** Whom did the Lord select as a messenger? Upon what errand did he send him? Why did Ananias object? What assurance did the Lord give him? What change took place in Saul? What public recognition of his conversion did Saul make?

**RACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Wherein are we here shown—  
God's infinite mercy to the sinful?  
Instant obedience to the divine call?  
The duty of doing something for Jesus?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

For what purpose was Saul going to Damascus? To find out believers in Jesus. What did he intend to do? Bring them bound to Jerusalem. What did he suddenly see? A light, brighter than the sun. What did Saul hear? Jesus speaking to him. What did Saul ask? "Who art thou, Lord?" What was the answer? "I am Jesus, whom you persecute." What did Saul next ask? "What wouldst thou have me do?" Where was Saul told to go? Into the city. What fell upon him? Sudden blindness. How long was he blind? Three days, in which

he neither ate nor drank. Whom did the Lord send to him? Ananias. What did he say? "Brother Saul, Jesus has sent me to you, that you might see again." What then happened? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.] What was given to Saul besides his sight? A new life in his heart. How was Saul changed from an enemy to a friend of Jesus? By the Spirit of God.

**WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.**

My cry—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" God answers—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Seek the Lord while he may be found." "Call upon him while he is near."

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**

**The Divine Transformation.**

I. AN IGNORANT SINNER.  
Saul yet breathing out threatenings, v. 1.  
"I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1 Tim. 1. 13.

II. A CONVICTED SINNER.  
Who art thou... I am Jesus, v. 5.  
"After...instructed, I smote...thigh," Jer. 31. 19.

III. A PROMPT DECISION.  
Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? v. 6.  
"What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16. 30.

IV. A SINCERE PENITENT.  
Without sight... neither... eat nor drink, v. 9.  
"Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," Ps. 51. 17.

V. AN EARNEST SEEKER.  
Behold, he prayeth, v. 11.  
"Seek ye the Lord... may be found," Isa. 55. 6.

VI. A WILLING BELIEVER.  
The Lord hath sent me, v. 17.  
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," Acts 16. 31.

VII. A REJOICING DISCIPLE.  
Received sight... arose... was baptized, v. 18.  
"God... hath shined in our hearts," 2 Cor. 4. 6.

**ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS**  
**The Revelation of Christ in Saul's Conversion**

1. Christ is here revealed as a living divine personality, v. 4. 5.
2. Christ is revealed as having knowledge and notice of men as individuals, and their acts, v. 4. 5.
3. Christ is revealed as having a deep interest in his Church, and a close sympathy with it, v. 5.
4. Christ is revealed as having an omniscient knowledge of the heart of man, with all its struggles and emotions, v. 5.
5. Christ is revealed as directing the labors of his people, assigning to each his work, v. 11. 15.



6. Christ is revealed as foreseeing and controlling the future of his kingdom and his followers. v. 15, 16.

7. Christ is revealed as forgiving the chief of sinners, and transforming him into the greatest of apostles. v. 18.

**CATECHISM QUESTION.**

7. *Why did God create all things?*

God created all things for the manifestation of his own glory, and to give happiness to his creatures.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.—Psalm 19. 1.

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.—Psalm 33. 5.

**ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.**

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

There was an old Irish tradition that whoever went up a certain lonely mountain, (I forget the name,) and spent the night in a particular spot, would be visited by the most unearthly and awful appearances. If he survived these, and returned home again, he would come either as a raving madman or as an eloquent and soul-stirring poet. He could not behold such sights and remain the mere ordinary man he was before. And true enough it is that there are some sights which must leave their mark upon the character or the career of a man. It was the sight of the changed and decayed face of a dead queen of Spain which caused the gay noble, Ignatius Loyola, to renounce the pleasures of the world and devote his life to furthering the interest of the Romish Church. To-day we read of a still more marvellous change. But when we look at the sight by which it was produced we can no longer wonder at it. For it was a sight at once heart-awing, heart-melting, heart-restoring.

What was it that Saul, the proud, strict Pharisee, the zealous persecutor of the Nazarenes, saw as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus?

1. He saw the *glory* of the risen Jesus.

The narrative of Luke speaks only of the light, above the brightness of the midday sun, and of the voice whose sound struck terror into the hearts of Saul's companions. But he himself has told us plainly that he saw with his bodily eyes the risen Jesus, the Son of God, the Lord of glory. He presents himself as a witness to the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15. 8,) and adduces the fact as the proof of his apostleship: "Am not I an apostle? Have I not seen Christ Jesus the Lord." 1 Cor. 9. 1. He knew that the apostles preached that Jesus was risen from the dead. He must have heard Stephen's testimony, that he saw "Jesus standing on

the right hand of God." But he had refused to hear the former, and had resisted the latter. He had set himself to withstand to the uttermost the proclamation of such a thing, and to persecute its witnesses unto death. And suddenly that very One in whom he had refused to believe, and whose name he was seeking to blot out from the earth, appeared to him. He saw the Lord, the King, the Ruler of heaven and earth, yet in the form, all-glorious, of a man. No wonder that he could afterward write: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," since he had seen in his glory "Christ the first-fruits." 1. Cor. 15. 23, 44. But how awful was the revelation! Let us imagine what would be the feelings of a youth, who, after heaping insults and injuries on some chance fellow-traveller, suddenly discovered that this very man was the person on whom his future prospects depended, the one who had power to enrich or to ruin him. Yet this can give but a faint conception of the blow that struck Saul. The discovery that he had been utterly mistaken, utterly wrong, in the pride of his self-will utterly rebellious against God, that he had fought against the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel—this, to a man like Saul, must have been the most crushing feature of the revelation. No wonder he was led by the hand into Damascus, a helpless, blind, broken creature.

But this was not all he had seen.

2. He saw the *heart* of the risen Jesus.

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

What a wonderful word! The Lord was at the right hand of God, far beyond the puny efforts of the fiercest opposer. Yet Saul was charged with persecuting him. What could it mean! Did he remember the words of the prophet: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye?" Zech. 2. 8. If you touch the knob outside the door, the bell inside will tinkle. What do you infer from this? That the two are connected. If you inflict pain on a single finger, the brain takes cognizance of it, and the whole man feels the hurt. Why! Because the two are indissolubly linked together in one living body. And Saul, the persecutor, saw in that hour the risen Jesus not only as Lord and God, but as one with his people. He saw that his heart felt all that affected them, that he was moved with their sorrows, burdened with their burdens, pained with their pain, distressed with their distresses. No wonder that the sight of that heart which he had wounded broke his own heart, and that for three days he "neither did eat nor drink."

But once more.

3. He saw the *mercy* of Jesus.

For the rebel who had fought against the Son of God, for the wretch who had persecuted the Saviour, the Redeemer of the world, what hope could be left? Yet no avenging bolt had descended on his head. Nor had he been condemned to bear the unending penalty of remorse. "It shall be told thee what thou must do." Then Jesus had not given him up! That lofty One, that tender One, had a future for him, a future to be moulded by his own gracious will. And as that thought sank into the heart of the repentant sinner, he turned with all his soul and prayed to the Lord who had shown him such mercy.

And so Saul was ready for the brotherly greeting and the healing hand of Ananias, ready to rise up, and, having received baptism in the name of Jesus, to go forth, a new man, and bear that name "before Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel."

That Jesus whom Saul beheld is the same now—the mighty, the tender, the merciful One. And all that might, all that tenderness, encircles forever those that now, as helpless sinners, accept and trust his mercy.

#### BEREAN METHODS.

##### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw a map of the region between Jerusalem and Damascus, and show the route of Saul's journey.... Damascus, its location, appearance, and history.... Saul's traits before his conversion.... The conversion of Saul: 1. The divine elements: voice, light, appearance, visions, etc.; 2. The human instrumentality—Ananias; 3. The steps of his salvation.... The divine transformation. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline).... Christ as revealed in Saul's conversion. (See Additional Practical Lessons).... Lessons concerning salvation: 1. The power of salvation; 2. The breadth, extent of salvation; 3. The humble instrumentality; 4. The results to the saved man; 5. The results to the world.... The worker for Christ—Ananias: 1. A lowly disciple; 2. A devout man; 3. A man of character and reputation, see Acts 22. 12; 4. A man in close fellowship with Christ, v. 13. 14; 5. An obedient worker.... ILLUSTRATIONS. Goliath's sword, turned from opposition to God's people to service; Voltaire's printing press in Switzerland, afterwards used in printing copies of the Bible: such was Saul, turned from an enemy to a helper of the Gospel.... Every village can match the transformation of Saul, in swearers converted to reverence, drunkards to temperance, and sinners to saints, by the power of Christ.

**References.** FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS: Ver. 1-18: Poetical, 3861, 3864; Prose, 7521. Ver. 1: Prose, 7131. Ver. 3: Prose, 1104.

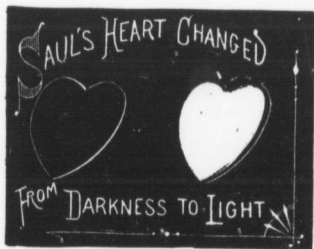
Ver. 4: Prose, 10001. Ver. 5: Prose, 5510. Ver. 11: Prose, 2234. Ver. 15: Prose, 11845. Ver. 17: Prose, 71 3. Ver. 18: Prose, 6859. .... FREEMAN: Vers. 1. 2: Jurisdiction of the council, 718. Ver. 5: Ox-goads, 225.

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

With what hauteur Saul is riding out of Jerusalem's gates! He has been anointed of the high-priest to visit Damascus. With the bloody hands of a persecutor, he will feel all through the synagogues after the disciples of Jesus, and then rake them down to Jerusalem. He journeys through Judea, wearily toils over the scorched plains at the foot of Anti-Libanus and nears Damascus. With a dreamlike beauty, like a city seen through the golden haze of enchanted sleep, rise its roofs clustering into a great white stone, around which is a green ring of rose-scented gardens, traversed by flashing rivulets from Anti-Libanus. The garden of the desert. Saul, the anointed of the high-priest, is about to enter. Is he not spotless? Is the taint of Stephen on him? Has he not a name for zeal? Bears he not the powerful commission of the high-priest to purify the infected synagogues of Damascus? He advances in pride, this flame that is to burn out contagion. He will enter Damascus in triumph. Without warning, in an instant, O that glare from the heavens, sharpened and cutting down the dazzled Saul in confusion to the ground! That mysterious voice also, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Did Saul see the Speaker himself, the nail-marks in his hands and feet, the spear-mark in his side, the thorn-marks in his brow? It is Stephen's master, the Lord of glory, that Saul is on his way to Damascus to find, to bind and drag to Jerusalem! The stones he saw falling on Stephen now seem to be falling on him! His awe-struck companions cannot move. When Saul rises from the ground he pitifully puts out his hands that others may lead him. Some one of the Lord's people may have said, "News has come that a persecutor is about to hunt through Damascus for us. Let us flee to that house-top near the city's gates, see how he looks, and when he has passed, escape from the city." They peer over the battlement only to see a poor blind man totter along. "No need to flee from him," they cry. In that way the haughty emissary of the high-priest enters Damascus. Night now, night around the persecutor. Three days pass without food or drink, three days that are one long night, three days filled with disappointment, shame, remorse. Does he see the face of Stephen in the darkness? Does he see the glare of that glory stopping him on the Damascus road? Three days that have their yearnings

for a better life. Three days when a soul in the dark is crying out to God. Some one, though, is hurrying along the street called "Straight." Some one enters the house where Saul is stopping. Some one that lays hands on him, that calls him "brother," that says Jesus will send vision and the Holy Ghost. Touching sight, that blind, humbled persecutor standing before the once despised Ananias whose hands are on his head. Instantly scales fall from his eyes. Scales fall from his soul. He looks up, and was face ever sweeter to the sight than that of Ananias to Saul? That very hour Saul feels the cleansing of baptism. Stephen's prayer for his enemies' forgiveness has been heard.

**Blackboard.**  
BY J. B. PHIPPS, B.S.Q.



**DIRECTIONS.** Make the letters in yellow. Draw one heart in outline with red crayon, make the other heart all white. From or in the first heart let some words be written, during the review of the lesson, that will show the condition of Saul's heart before conversion. In or near the second heart write such words as will show the state of his heart after it had been made white in the blood of Jesus.

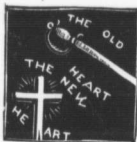
**Primary and Intermediate.**

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT:** *The New Heart.* Ask what a captain is, and picture before the children, in words, two companies of people, one marching one way, the other in an opposite direction. A little crayoning, if only straight marks and round dots are used, will help. Show that each company has its captain; each follows where he leads. Teach that everybody, little and big, belongs to

one or the other of these companies. Jesus is the Captain of the company that follows the straight way—Satan of the other. What kind of a way does he lead? Show that his ways of cheating, lying, disobedience, etc., are crooked ways. Recall Stephen's death, and tell that a young man, Saul by name, was there, and was glad to see Stephen stoned to death. He hated Jesus and all who loved Jesus. To which company did he belong?

**THE OLD SAUL.**



Tell how Saul persecuted Christians after the death of Stephen. He thought this was right. The Holy Spirit had not yet shined into his heart, so he could not see the truth. He shut the door, and tried to keep the light out. We do this when, like Saul, we are busy doing wrong things. Point out Damascus on the map, and tell why Saul went there. He rode along with a heart full of hatred towards Christians. Which did he carry, the sword or the cross? Tell of the bright light, and the voice that spoke from heaven. Lead children to see that Saul's cruelty to others was cruelty to Jesus, and thence teach that our ill-tempers, hasty words, etc., do really hurt Jesus. Do we want to hurt and persecute our best friend?

**THE NEW SAUL.**

Teach that Saul began to be a new man as soon as he began to obey. We can never get a new heart in place of our bad heart until we obey Jesus. Tell about the three days in which he could neither eat nor drink. Besides this he was blind. Show that while his outside eyes were closed, his inside eyes were just beginning to see, and this is what he saw—a sinful, black heart, and a holy Saviour ready to wash it clean. This is what we see when we let the Holy Spirit shine into our hearts. Yes, it was a new man that could see these things, and when Saul really saw them, God sent a man to him who told him to receive his sight, and he did! Then he arose and was baptized, and now God could speak through him. Teach that we all need to have new hearts, given by God, before we can see the truth about ourselves or others.

A. D. 37.

**LESSON IV.—SAUL PREACHING CHRIST.**

Acts 9. 19-31.

April 23.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then *a* was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.  
*a* Chap. 26. 20.  
20 And straightway he preached Christ in

the synagogues, *b* that he is the son of God.  
*b* Chap. 8. 37.  
21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said, *c* Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came

hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests.

*e* Chap. 8. 3; Gal. 1. 13.  
**22** But Saul increased the more in strength, and *d* confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ,  
*d* Chap. 13. 28.

**23** And after that many days were fulfilled, *e* the Jews took counsel to kill him:  
*e* Chap. 23. 12; 25. 3.

**24** But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

**25** Then the disciples took him by night, and *f* let him down by the wall in a basket.  
*f* Josh. 2. 15; 1 Sam. 19. 12.

**26** And *g* when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.  
*g* Chap. 22. 17; Gal. 1. 17.

**27** But *A* Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.  
*A* Chap. 4. 36; 13. 2.

**28** And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

**29** And he spake *i* boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the *j* Grecians: *k* but they went about to slay him.  
*i* Eph. 6. 19.—*j* Chap. 6. 1; 11. 20.—*k* 2 Cor. 11. 26.

**30** Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

**31** Then *l* had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.  
*l* Psa. 119. 165.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

The persecutor, changed now to a believer, the lion transformed into a lamb, seeks the disciples of Christ in Damascus; but it is as friends and companions, not as victims of his persecuting zeal. He stands up in the synagogue, not to denounce and arrest the followers of Christ, but to proclaim his own faith in the Saviour, and to relate his own experience of salvation, while the listening Jews are filled with amazement. After a few days of bold testimony and of Christian companionship, Saul seeks for retirement in the solitude of the desert, where a Moses and Elijah, a John the Baptist, where a Christ have sought it before. Months, and perhaps years, pass away. The persecution is remembered only as a dream, when once more Saul appears in Damascus, a mature Christian, with views of redemption broadened by the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost. He now preaches what Stephen preached once, and what once had stirred his own hate—the Gospel of salvation for all, Gentile as well as Jew. The mantle of Stephen's trial, as well as of Stephen's mission, falls upon him, and Saul, too, tastes the cup of persecution, sweetened by the comfort of the Spirit. Let down over the wall in a basket,

flying by night from the city which he had once looked upon with such exultation, the transformed Saul now finds his way to Jerusalem, not to be received with honour by the Sanhedrin, but to seek out what is left of the little company of disciples, and to offer himself as their brother. But he tastes a cup even more bitter than open enmity: the doubt and disbelief of those whom he had expected to hail as his companions. In his hour of trial, Barnabas, perhaps a friend of his youth, comes forward with warm confidence, extends the hand of fellowship, and for the first time Saul, the sometime persecutor, and Simon Peter, the chief of the apostles, meet in friendship. A few weeks of stay in Jerusalem, a few bold testimonies in the synagogue, more danger of death at the hands of angry Jews, another vision of the Glorious One whom he saw on the plain of Damascus, and then Saul is hastening back to his own home by the Mediterranean, there to toil in the tent-maker's shop until the Lord shall open before him his work in life.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 19. Received meat.** "Took food," Rev. Ver. **He was strengthened.** After three days without food or sleep he was in a weak condition of body, and needing food. **Certain days.** Probably a few days, or weeks at the longest, occupied in rest, and in becoming acquainted with the disciples, to whom he was introduced by Ananias. **Disciples at Damascus.** These were Jews only, who believed in Jesus. Some of them may have been sojourners in Jerusalem at the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2), others refugees from the persecution. Up to this time they worshipped with the other Jews in the synagogue.

**20. Straightway.** At once, without the delay which worldly wisdom would have coun-  
 sold. 1. Those who have been Christ's open enemies have all the more need to be his pronounced friends. 2. It is easier to do duty straightway than after delaying. **Preached Christ.** Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "proclaimed Jesus." All Jews expected Christ or Messiah, but the Gospel declares that Jesus is Christ. **In the synagogues.** In the very place where he had expected to execute judgment upon the followers of Jesus, he now proclaimed him the promised Messiah of Israel. **The Son of God.** A truth which he had vividly realized, since he had seen him in his glory. 3. The testimony of experience is always the clearest and most powerful to influence others.

**21. All that heard him.** The unbelieving Jews, who had looked forward to his coming with eager expectation, now listened with mingled anger and astonishment. **Destroyed them.** Rev. Ver., "made havoc," by breaking up the assemblies, by imprisoning and scourging and scattering the disciples. 4. Divine power can work a renewal of character more wonderful than the creation of a world. **Came hither.** The coming of Saul was known to the unbelieving section of the Jews in Damascus, and may have been suggested by them. **Unto the chief-priests.** See notes in last lesson, ver. 2.

**22. Saul increased.** Just at this point belongs an event mentioned only in Gal. 1. 17, 18: the visit of Saul to Arabia, where he remained the greater part of three years, probably in communion with the Spirit, and in preparation for his great mission. For to Paul as an apostle was given a work independent of all other preachers, and even of the apostles; that of proclaiming Jesus as the Saviour of Gentiles as well as Jews. This truth, and the vigour and intensity with which he proclaimed it, accounts for the persecutions which everywhere arose against him personally, more than against any or all others of the apostles, and also for the apparent coolness with which he was received by even the disciples at Jerusalem and elsewhere, to whom this doctrine was not wholly acceptable. **Con-founded the Jews.** This was after his return from Arabia, and his reappearance in the synagogue. The journey is not related here, because the book is not a biography of Paul, but an account of the Church and its progress. **Proving.** By the fulfilment of Old Testament Scripture in the life of Jesus.

**23. Many days.** A long time after his conversion, perhaps hinting at the stay in Arabia. **The Jews took counsel.** Toward the other disciples they felt dislike, toward Saul they felt an unbounded rage; not only because of his sudden turning from their side, but more especially on account of his Gospel of Gentile salvation. **To kill him.** This they hoped to do, because the local authorities were in league with them. 2 Cor. 11. 32. 5. The truth does not always meet with favour from the world.

**24, 25. Known of Saul.** Through the very disciples whom he had come to slay. **Watched the gates.** As only through the gates could he expect to leave the city, they watched them with officers furnished by the ethnarch (or ruler) Aretas. **Disciples took him.** Farrar thinks that this word indicates that it was done, if not against his will, yet without his full co-operation. **Let him down by the wall.** From some house which overhung the wall, and just after the guard had gone by. From the language in 1 Cor. 11. 30-33, it would appear that Paul felt this manner of escape to be very humiliating.

**26. Come to Jerusalem.** His return was lowly in men's eyes, but in reality far nobler than his departure, three years before. **He assayed.** From Gal. 1 it would appear that this was a quiet and private visit, lasting only fifteen days, and its object was to meet with Peter, the leading spirit in the Church. **Joined himself.** United with the disciples in their meetings, which were conducted in private houses. **Afraid of him.** They may have heard something of his conversion five hundred miles away, and three years before; but no particulars had been known, and they had learned to be suspicious in an era of persecution. 6. Even those enlightened by the Spirit are liable to mistakes.

**27. Barnabas.** Named here as if a former acquaintance of Saul; which was likely, since Cyprus (the original home of Barnabas) was near Tarsus. He had already shown a generous spi-

rit (chap. 4. 36. 37), which had made him prominent in the Church. **Brought him to the apostles.** Not to all the twelve, but to Peter, and James, the Lord's brother, as representing them Gal. 1 18, 19. The rest may have been absent from the city. **Declared unto them.** Vouched for Saul, by relating his divine call. **Seen the Lord.** One who had seen the Lord was qualified for acceptance as a disciple. **Preached boldly.** The best evidence of his sincerity.

**28, 29. Was with them.** During his stay of fifteen days he doubtless worshipped with the apostles in the temple, and went with them among the assemblies of the Church. **Spoke boldly.** Probably in the synagogues, where he had met in former times. **With the Grecians.** The Jews of foreign extraction, generally of broader views than those of Palestine. To this class he had himself belonged, and he hoped to accomplish good among them. **Went about to slay him.** Why Saul, and not the rest of the apostles? Because already he had caught up the mantle of Stephen, and was preaching salvation for the Gentiles.

**30. The brethren.** A name now first used of the Christian Church. 7. Those who have Christ for their Elder Brother should be brothers to each other. **They brought him.** He had been expressly directed by a vision to depart from Jerusalem (Acts 22. 17-21), and therefore yielded more readily to the friendly influence of the disciples. **To Cesarea.** The provincial capital of Palestine, on the sea-coast, south of Mount Carmel. Here dwelt the Roman governor, and here, a little while after Saul's visit, the Gospel was first openly given to the Gentiles. At Cesarea Saul would perhaps meet the evangelist Philip. (See Lesson II). **Sent him forth.** By ship, in all probability. **To Tarsus.** See last lesson, note on verse 11. He had been absent from this place, his early home, for at least four years; and here he remained for a few years longer.

**31. Then had the churches rest.** From persecution; partly because the Jews were themselves suffering persecution from the emperor Caius Caligula. 8. God tempers both seasons of peace and of trial to the best interest of his cause. **Throughout all Judea.** The dispersion of the disciples had resulted in Churches through all Judea, of whose history we know nothing. **Galilee.** The only mention of Churches in the province where the life of Jesus had been mainly spent, and where we should expect to find many disciples. **Samaria.** See Lesson I, notes. **Were edified.** Built up, not in numbers, but in personal growth of character. **Fear of the Lord.** A reverence for Christ as divine, and an obedience to his commands. **Comfort of the Holy Ghost.** The word "comfort" here means, in general, the help from the presence of the Spirit in every way afforded. **Multiplied** Increased in number, both as regards members and Churches.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

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

## OUTLINE.

1. A Bold Preacher, v. 19-22.
2. A Base Plot, v. 23-25.
3. A Busy Pilgrim, v. 26-30.
4. A Blessed Peace, v. 31.

## HOME READINGS.

- M. Saul preaching Christ. Acts 9. 19-31.  
 Th. His preparation. Gal. 1. 1-17.  
 W. His preaching. Acts 17. 22-34.  
 Th. His faithfulness. Acts 26. 19-32.  
 F. His labours. Acts 20. 17-38.  
 S. His sufferings. 2 Cor. 6. 1-10.  
 S. His reward. 2 Tim. 4. 1-8.

**Time.**—Immediately following the events of the last lesson, A. D. 37 to 39 or 40, a period of about three years.

**Places.**—Damascus, Jerusalem, and Tarsus in Asia Minor.

**Explanations.**—*Received meat*—Any kind of food is here meant. *Strengthened*—After three days without food or sleep. *Certain days*—A little while only. *Straightway*—From a persecutor he became at once a preacher. *In the synagogues*—The places where the Jews met to worship. *Preached Christ*—This should be "Preached Jesus." *All that heard him*—The Jews, not the Christians. *He that destroyed*—The one who had persecuted and scattered the Church. *Saul increased the more*—Grew more mighty as he continued preaching. *Confounded the Jews*—They could not answer his words. *That this is very Christ*—That Jesus came as the promised Saviour of the world. *After . . . many days*—During this period Saul spent some time in Arabia, Gal. 1. 17, and then returned to Damascus. *Were fulfilled*—Were ended. *Took counsel*—Formed a plot. *To kill him*—They were angry because they could not answer him. *Was known*—Became known. *Watched the gates*—To kill him while going out of the city. *In a basket*—From a window overhanging the wall. 2 Cor. 11. 13. *Came to Jerusalem*—At least three years had passed since he left Jerusalem. *He assayed*—Undertook. *Afraid of him*—They had not heard that he had become a disciple of Jesus, or had not believed it. *Brought him to the apostles*—To Peter and James, the Lord's brother. Gal. 1. 18, 19. *He was with them*—They received him as a believer in Jesus. *Spoke boldly in the name*—Spoke for Jesus as boldly as he had spoken against him. *Against the Grecians*—The Jews of foreign birth, who had been enemies of Stephen and his own friends. *Went about*—Undertook. *Down to Caesarea*—After two weeks' stay in Jerusalem. *Sent him forth*—By a sea voyage. *The churches rest*—From persecution. *Edified*—Were built up in the faith. *Comfort of the Holy Ghost*—The joy which the Spirit brought. *Multiplicd*—Increased in number.

## LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 777, *New Hymn Book*. 7s & 6s.  
 Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
 Ye soldiers of the cross!  
 Lift high his royal banner;  
 It must not suffer loss:  
 From victory unto victory  
 His army will he lead,  
 Till every foe is vanquished,  
 And Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
 Stand in his strength alone;  
 The arm of flesh will fail you;  
 Ye dare not trust your own:  
 Put on the gospel armour,  
 And, watching unto prayer,  
 Where duty calls, or danger,  
 Be never wanting there.

No. 679, *New Hymn Book*.

L. M.

Shall I, for fear of feeble man,  
 The Spirit's course in me restrain?  
 Or undismayed, in deed and word  
 Be a true witness for my Lord?  
 Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I  
 Conceal the word of God most high?  
 How then before thee shall I dare  
 To stand, or how thine anger bear?  
 For this let men revile my name,  
 No cross I shun, I fear no shame;  
 All hail, reproach, and welcome, pain!  
 Only thy terrors, Lord, restrain.

## QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. A Bold Preacher, v. 19-22. Who was he? What had happened to him? What did he now do? How did this show his boldness? What did the people think of him? How may we show boldness in Christ's cause?

2. A Base Plot, v. 23-25. What was it? Who made it? Why were they so angry at him? How did Saul escape from them? How is this told in 2 Cor. 11. 32, 33?

3. A Busy Pilgrim, v. 26-30. Where did Saul go? [Show on the map.] What did he try to do at Jerusalem? How was he treated, and why? Who helped him at this time, and how? Who was Barnabas? Acts 4. 36, 37. What resulted from this visit to Jerusalem? Why and how did Saul leave the city? Where did he go? Why to this city? Acts 21. 39.

4. A Blessed Peace, v. 31. Who had peace? From what was this rest? How did they use this peace? What four facts are given in this verse? How does the Gospel give peace?

## TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

- How does lesson show—  
 1. An example of courage in Christ's cause?  
 2. An example of earnestness in Christ's work?  
 3. An example of kindness toward Christ's disciples?

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school). 1. What did Saul do after he was converted? "Straightway he preached Christ." 2. How was his preaching received in Damascus? The Jews tried to kill him. 3. How was Saul let down over the wall of Damascus? In a basket. 4. What did he do at Jerusalem? He joined the apostles. 5. What followed the conversion. The Church had rest from persecution.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Christian fellowship.

## QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. A Bold Preacher, v. 19-22. What was Saul's occupation in Damascus? Why did his preaching cause astonishment? What doctrine did he preach? With what effect?



2. **A Base Plot**, v. 23-25. What mischief was plotted against Saul? What is said in Psalm 37. 12? To whom was the plot known? How was it spoiled by Saul's friends?

3. **A Busy Pilgrim**, v. 26-30. Why did the disciples fear to receive Saul? How was their fear overcome? What was the character of Saul's preaching? What opposition did it arouse? How was Saul's safety secured?

4. **A Blessed Peace**, v. 31. From what did the Churches have rest? Why had they especially suffered in the places mentioned? What was the character of the Church in its season of rest? What success attended such a life?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

What duty follows the reception of spiritual truth?

How should believers receive a penitent sinner?

What must those expect who speak the truth boldly?

When may the Church look for large increase in numbers?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

What did Saul begin to do at once? To preach. How did he preach? Boldly and with great wisdom. What did he compel the Jews to believe? That Jesus was the Son of God. What did the Jews plan to do? Kill him. How did the disciples help Saul to escape? They let him down over the wall of the city in a basket. Where did he then go? To Jerusalem. What did he want to do? Join the believers. What did the disciples fear? That he was not a true disciple! Who finally brought him to the apostles? Barnabas. (Repeat GOLDEN TEXT). What was Saul's great desire? To preach in Jerusalem. With whom did he dispute there? With the Grecian Jews. What warning was again given Saul? To leave Jerusalem at once. For what reason? The angry Jews were trying to kill him. Where did he then go? To Tarsus, eight hundred miles over the sea. How did God bless the Churches? With rest and prosperity.

**WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.**

Saul began at once to work for Jesus—Are you doing all you can for Christ? Are you letting Him do all He can for you? Are you trying to tell others what He can do? Is there anything He wants you to do that you will not?

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**

**The Young Christian.**

I. A CHRISTIAN IN FELLOWSHIP.

Certain days with the disciples, v. 19.

"We have fellowship one with another."  
1 John 1. 7.

II. A CHRISTIAN IN WORK.

Straightway he preached Christ, v. 20.

"Whosoever thy hand findeth . . . with thy might." Eccles. 9. 10.

III. A CHRISTIAN IN GROWTH.

Saul increased the more in strength, v. 22.

"Grow in grace . . . knowledge of our Lord."  
2 Pet. 3. 18.

IV. A CHRISTIAN IN POWER.

Confounded the Jews . . . proving, v. 22.

"Our sufficiency is of God." 1 Cor. 3. 5.

V. A CHRISTIAN IN TRIAL.

Watched the gates to kill him, v. 24.

"Troubled on every side . . . not distressed."  
2 Cor. 4. 8.

VI. A CHRISTIAN IN COURAGE.

Spake boldly in the name of the Lord, v. 29.

"Earnestly contend for the faith." Jude 3.

**ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**

**The Evidences of a True Conversion.**

1. A true conversion is shown by seeking new associations with the people of God, v. 19.

2. A true conversion is shown by promptness and thoroughness of testimony to Christ, v. 20.

3. A true conversion is shown by development in Christian knowledge and power, v. 22.

4. A true conversion is shown by patience in suffering evil for the sake of Christ, v. 23-25.

5. A true conversion is shown by steadfastness under the coldness and misunderstanding of the professed followers of Christ, v. 26.

6. A true conversion is shown by earnest labour for the salvation of former friends, v. 29.

**CATECHISM QUESTION.**

8. *Does God preserve all things which he hath made?*

God preserves all things which he hath made; for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power.

In him we live, and move, and have our being.—Acts 17. 28.

9. *Do all good things which we enjoy come from him?*

All good things which we enjoy come from God, for "He satisfieth the desire of every living thing."—Psalm 145. 16.

The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.—Psalm 145. 15.

**ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.**

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

HE is a proud soldier to whom is committed the charge of the colours. And yet the post has always been one of peculiar danger. The standard-bearer is a prominent person; he must lead the way, and against him the hostile weapons will be specially directed.

"And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may," says King Henry of Navarre in Macaulay's spirited poem. The standard-bearer will give his life to keep his charge safe, and will be mindful of it in his dying moments. On the field of Isandula two English officers were found lying with the colours well concealed beneath their dead bodies, so that the Zulus had failed to discover them.

Note three requisites in a standard-bearer. He must carry the colours boldly—no coward-hand can bear them; humbly lifting up the flag and making that the prominent object, not himself; persistently—not lifting them and laying them down again, but carrying them to the end.

Our lesson to-day is about a standard-bearer.

Saul of Tarsus had been chosen of God to hold a prominent position in the army of Christ; to go forward; to be first in daring and in danger; to carry the banner where it had never yet floated, and plant it firmly upon hostile battlements. This passage gives us the beginning of his career. Let us notice:

1. What the banner was, which he bore. We saw it in the last lesson. "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel." In like manner we read in the Old Testament that Moses called the altar he built after the victory over Amalek "Jehovah-Nissi," "The Lord my banner." See also Psa. 20. 5. Now see

2. How Saul bore this banner.

*He bore it boldly.* Imagine the scene in one of the synagogues at Damascus. The place is filled with worshippers. After the reading of the law a man steps forward to say a "word of exhortation" to the people. See Acts 13. 15. He is known as a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," a strict Pharisee, zealous for the law; and it is no secret that he had undertaken the journey to Damascus in order to lay hands on any whom he could find there of the followers of Jesus, who was crucified. What will he say? He expounds the ancient prophecies, and shows that they have been fulfilled—fulfilled in One whom he calls the Son of God. And this One is Jesus! The assembly can hardly keep in their amazement; they can scarcely believe their ears. But there is no mistake about it. Nor is this one solitary confession of faith. Undaunted by the gathering wrath, Saul repeats his testimony, day after day, in synagogue after synagogue. And, later on, it is continued at Jerusalem among his old companions, the "Greicians."

*He bore it humbly.* It was the banner he sought to exalt, not himself. He did not make his appearance in Jerusalem until driven out of Damascus, and though conscious that he was a chosen apostle of Christ, (1 Cor. 11. 5; Gal. 1. 12), he put forward no claim, but in a meek and brotherly manner "assayed to join himself to the disciples" bearing their rebuffs and suspicions with patience until Barnabas came to make all straight between him and them.

*He bore it persistently.* Forced to leave Damascus he preached boldly at Jerusalem. Sent away from Jerusalem he continued his testimony at Tarsus. Gal. 1. 21, 23. Now see

3. What bearing this banner brought on Saul. He is soon a marked man—one to be got rid of at any price. At Damascus, at Jerusalem, his life is sought. The "disciples" watch over his safety, and convey him beyond reach of his enemies. But the danger goes on to the end—never ceasing until the standard-bearer is called from victory home to glory. 2 Tim. 4. 6-8.

Here is an example for all. Every servant of Christ, however young, must bear His banner, though some are called to do so in a more prominent measure than others. Every Christian should be, in some degree, aggressive, pressing forward to carry the banner where it has hitherto been unseen or unrecognized. One day, when some companions of the brave young officer,

Hedley Vicars, came into his tent, they were startled by the sight of an open Bible lying on his table. They did not, he tells us, "fancy these new colours." But he kept them there steadily till he was strong enough to bear them aloft, and boldly and earnestly to fight in the name of Christ against all adversaries. Every Christian boy or girl may show their colours as he did, and those that show them steadily will, by-and-by, be ready to bear them bravely.

But it must be done boldly. Even worldly people are surprised to find a Christian shrink from confessing Christ. And it must be borne humbly. He who is constantly putting himself forward will not win many to his banner. It is not my worth, but the worth of my master, that I, if a true standard-bearer, shall be desirous to show. Again, it must be borne persistently—not lifted up now and then, but carried on to the end.

And herein lies the great difference between earthly colours and the heavenly banner. They are but symbols; this is a reality. Therefore they must be guarded, while this guards the bearer, and ensures his final victory. For the name of the Lord "shall endure for ever," and "all kings shall bow down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." Psa. 72. 11, 17.

### BEREAN METHODS.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw the map of the Syrian coast, showing also the shore of Cilicia, and locate Damascus, Jerusalem, Cesarea, and Tarsus. . . . Show the journeys of Saul in this lesson. . . . This may be presented as, 1. The young Christian in Damascus. 2. In Jerusalem. 3. In Tarsus. . . . Saul as the example for young Christians. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline). . . . The evidences of a true conversion as here shown. (See Additional Practical Lessons). . . . Find what is related of Barnabas, here and elsewhere, as an example of the large-hearted Christian. . . . Duties here shown for older Christians: 1. To welcome young disciples; 2. To help young disciples; 3. To have confidence in young disciples; 4. To have confidence in young disciples. . . . Duties for young disciples. . . . The privileges of the Church: 1. God's care; 2. Rest from trials; 3. Growth in grace; 4. Comfort of the Holy Ghost; 5. Increase. . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. Saul's transformation may be illustrated by the diamond made by divine power from the dark and dingy charcoal. . . . The fear of the Church (ver. 26) was like that of a little company of soldiers on guard during the War for the Union, who saw approaching a band of men in the twilight far outnumbering their own force. They gave themselves up for lost, but when they saw the force nearer at hand it proved to be a reinforcement from their own army. . . . A traveller stopped at a rude cabin in a lonely place, and asked for lodging. They feared him, but dare not refuse admittance. They were full of alarm until, watching him through a knot-hole in the garret-room where he slept, they saw him kneel by his bed in prayer. Then they knew that they were safe. . . . Ver. 31: Both the storm and the sunshine,



the winter and the summer, are needful for the growth of the grain. So trial and rest both minister to the help of Christ's Church.

**References.** FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Ver. 20 : Prose, 7555. Ver. 21 : Poetical, 3863. Ver. 22 : Prose, 11146. Ver. 31 : Prose, 3004. .... FREEMAN. Ver. 25 : Wall-window and basket, 871.

**Primary and Intermediate.**

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *Believing Leads to Working.*

**REVIEW.** Print "A bright light," "A voice from the sky," "A heart made new," and let children tell all they can about each. Teach that God loved Saul, and wanted him, so he called him; teach, also, that God loves all alike, and that he calls each child to belong to Him.

To be taught : 1. That Saul began to work for Jesus right away. 2. That his love for Jesus brought him into trouble. 3. That his love for Jesus gave him new friends.

1. Recall Saul's question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Tell that Saul was a man of influence and position, and had come to Damascus to persecute those who loved Jesus. Now he had begun to love Him, too! Had Saul been right or wrong before? Ask how we may know that he was wrong—by the spirit of hate he showed, and teach that knowing Jesus always puts love into the heart. When we have been wrong what must we do? Confess it. What did Saul have to confess? Where? Teach that love led Saul to preach Jesus, and that without delay. Saul did not wait to get stronger or wiser. If we are in a dark place, and see only a little bit of light, we must go toward that light. Then more will come. This is what Saul did.



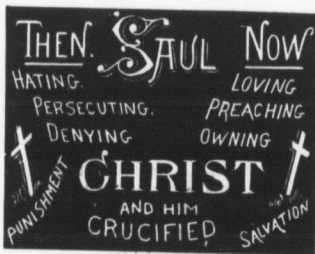
2. Recall the way the Jews treated Stephen, asking why. For the same reason they were now angry at Saul. Show a picture, or explain how in old times cities were surrounded by walls, and tell how Saul's friends managed to get him out of the city. Teach that Saul got into this trouble because he was open and manly in confessing Christ. If he had been cautious, and waited for others to see by his actions that he

loved Jesus, he would not have suffered thus. Did he do right? Yes, and we should follow his example in openly confessing our love for Jesus.

3. Tell why Saul went to Jerusalem. He wanted to see Peter. Ask why? A little while ago he hated Peter, and wanted to see him killed. Now he loved him, and wanted to be with him. Teach that a new heart makes new feelings, new friends, a new man. Saul was now a new man because Jesus lived in his heart. Tell how the disciples feared Saul, and the friend he found among them. What wonderful story had Saul to tell to his new friends? Make a heart with the word "new" in the centre. Print "Love" in large letters around, and show that now Saul loved both Jews and Christians because he loved Jesus.

**Blackboard.**

BY J. B. PHIPPS, MSQ.



**DIRECTIONS.** If you have coloured crayon select bright colours, such as red, yellow, light green, and white. Write SAUL in one colour, the words under "then" all in one colour, and the words under "now" all in another colour. "Christ and him crucified" should be in white. Large letters look quite attractive by making the upper half in one colour and the lower half in another.

FROM HENCEFORTH  
**PAUL DID I MUST**  
 ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE  
**PREACH CHRIST**  
 AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

A. D. 39.

**LESSON V.—PETER WORKING MIRACLES.**

April 29.

Acts 9. 82-43.



82-32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout a all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. a Chap. 8. 14.

83-33 And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

84-34 And Peter said unto him, Eneas, b Jesus Christ maketh thee whole : arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

b Matt. 9. 6; John 6. 8; chap. 3. 6.; 4. 10.

85-35 And all that dwell in Lydda and c Sarou saw him, and d turned to the Lord.

c 1 Chroo. 5. 16—d Chap. 11. 21.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is

called *α Dorcas* : this woman was full *ε* of good works and alms-deeds which she did.

*α Or, Doe, or, Doe.*—*ε* Prov. 31. 31; 1 Tim. 2.10; 5. 10; Titus 2. 5; Jas. 1. 27.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in *f* an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would *b* not delay to come to them.

*b Or, be grieved.*  
39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.

40 But Peter *g* put them all forth, and kneeled *A* down, and prayed; and turning him to the body *i* said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

*g* Matt. 9. 25.—*A* 1 Kings 17. 19-23; 2 Kings 4. 32-36; chap. 7. 69.—*i* Mark 5. 41; John 11. 43.

41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; *f* and many believed in the Lord.

*f* John 11. 45; 12. 11.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in *k* Joppa with one Simon *l* a tanner.

*k* Josh. 19. 46; 2 Chron. 2. 16; Ezra 3. 7; Jonah 1. 3.—*l* Chap. 19. 6.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

The churches of Christ have now become so numerous that some supervision is needed, and Peter, the chief of the apostles, goes among them bringing encouragement and counsel. Upon the plain of Sharon he pauses at Lydda, where a miracle of healing arrests universal attention, and brings the whole village to the Lord. Suddenly he is summoned to Joppa, nine miles away. The beloved disciple, Dorcas, "the Gazelle," whose life has been fruitful of good works, is dead, and the Church is in mourning. They have heard of mighty works wrought by the apostles, and it may be that Peter can restore to the widowed and the poor their departed benefactor. Peter comes, and enters the chamber of death, not noisy with Oriental grief, but chastened with Christian sorrow. Around are the poor women whose very garments, sewed by the fingers of the one whom they mourn, are the memorials of her character. The apostle bids them all depart, and alone kneels by the dead. The prayer, mighty in faith, is uttered, and then, conscious of the divine power, he speaks in mantles the waxen cheek, a thrill sweeps through the cold frame; the spirit returns, the eyes of the woman, once dead but now alive again, open, and as she sees the unknown stranger, she rises. There is rejoicing as the saints and widows enter the room once more, and look upon the living face of her whom they were just mourning. The apostle tarries long in the city where the wonder has been wrought, and dwells with a lowly workingman, whose house, despised of men, is known of the angels and beloved of heaven.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 32. It came to pass.** Probably while Saul was at Tarsus, soon after the events of the last lesson. **As Peter passed.** Not hiding from persecution, but on a tour of inspection and supervision, showing that unity and supervision were recognized by the Church.

**Throughout all quarters.** The Church was now extended throughout all Palestine, and as far north as Damascus and Antioch. Chap. 11. 19 **He came down.** From the high land of Jerusalem to the low plain by the shore.

**To the saints.** One of the names applied to the followers of Christ very often in the New Testament, especially in the epistles. It means "holy, consecrated ones," and points to what disciples of Christ should be. 1. God's people have the privilege of holiness. **At Lydda.** On the plain of Sharon, south of Mount Carmel, and about a day's journey from Jerusalem. The church there was probably founded by Philip the evangelist (Lesson II). 2. The work abides after the worker departs.

**33. A certain man.** This miracle is related, not as being more remarkable than others, except in the results which flowed from it.

**Eneas.** Probably a disciple, since Peter was visiting the churches, but of no marked character so far as known. **Eight years.** So Sick of the palsy. Paralysis in many aggravated forms is frequent in the East. 3. How great should be our thankfulness in the enjoyment of health!

**34. Peter said.** Notice the difference between miracles wrought by Jesus, and those of his disciples. Peter is careful to show that the power is not of himself; while Christ invoked no name higher than his own. **Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.** "Jesus the Messiah healeth thee." A proclamation of Jesus as Messiah complete and whole. **Make thy bed.** Literally, "Spread for thyself." Thus he would give evidence that he was no longer helpless, and needing the ministry of others. The bed was simply a roll of matting or of carpeting spread upon the floor. **Arose immediately.** Showing an immediate and a perfect cure.

**35. All that dwell.** Not meaning every individual, but the people in general. **Saw him.** Saw him after the healing, and heard of the miracle. **And Saron.** The Rev. Ver. has "at Lydda and in Sharon," one referring to a place, the other to the entire plain, between Philistia and Mount Carmel. **Turned to the Lord.** The miracle called attention to the Gospel, and thus led to faith; and as a result the Gospel became dominant through the community. The purpose of miracles was not to convince, but to awaken the interest of the people.

**36. Joppa.** An ancient town on the sea-shore, from time immemorial the principal seaport of Palestine. It is now called "Jaffa," and has about fifteen thousand inhabitants. **A certain disciple.** The word means "a learner," with especial reference to one who learns

by companionship with a teacher. 5. Every follower of Christ is, by his very name, a student under him. **Tabitha...Dorcas.** One is the Hebrew, the other the Greek word, meaning "gazelle." Both names would be in use in a mixed population; and as names in the East are given to represent traits of person or character, this may indicate that she was possessed of beauty in person, as she certainly had in character. **Full of good works.** Her love to Christ inspired love for others, and this led her to spend her life in doing good. 6. Good works are the outgrowth of discipleship. **Almsdeeds.** Works wrought especially for the poor. 7. We see here what a sphere of opportunity Christianity opens for woman.

**37. Sick and died.** 8. God sometimes takes his people to heaven when, to our eyes, they seem most needed in the world. **When they had washed.** According to the Jewish custom of preparing the dead for burial; in this case an evidence that she was really dead. **In an upper chamber.** Delaying the burial, which in the East is on the day of death, in order to send for the apostle. Probably this was a room upon the roof.

**38. Nigh unto Joppa.** Nine miles distant. **Heard that Peter.** They had heard of the healing of Eneas, and doubtless of other miracles, and had a hope that perhaps Peter could bring the beloved Gazelle back to life. **Desiring him.** The Rev. Ver. has "entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us." 9. "Too late to send for a physician, but not too late to send for an apostle."

**39. Peter went.** Perhaps not knowing whether his ministry would be to comfort the mourners or remove their sorrow. **The widows stood by.** No hired mourners, but genuine grief. 10 "This was the best epitaph, the tears of the poor."—*Robertson*. **Showing the coats.** The tunics, or inner garments. **Garments.** The outer mantle worn over the tunic. **Which Dorcas made.** They showed them on their own persons, not as relics kept for adoration.

**40. Put them all forth.** That he might have the greater power in his prayer by being alone. **Prayed.** Undoubtedly to Christ for the restoration of the life of the departed saint. 11. We may bring every desire to the altar, and the Lord will grant us what is best. **Tabitha, arise.** As a Hebrew he spoke her Hebrew name. He did not invoke the name of Jesus in the miracle, because he had addressed him in his prayer. **Opened her eyes.** A sign that the soul had returned to its forsaken tenement. **Saw Peter.** He was probably a stranger, and she sat up in surprise at seeing him.

**41. Gave her his hand.** A reassuring token, and a help. **Called the saints.** The disciples in the house, her companions in Christian work, and the widows to whom she had ministered. **Presented her alive.** The whole miracle was wrought with composure and deliberation, showing a consciousness of divine power. Thus the power of Christ over the grave was again made manifest.

**42, 43. All Joppa.** As it was a large city, not a village, as Lydda, it is said that all heard, and that many believed, not that the whole city became believers. **Tarried many days.** Some think that this means a whole year. **With one Simon.** A very common name among the Jews, as nine persons bearing it are mentioned in the New Testament. **A tanner.** This would show that Peter had already relaxed somewhat of his Jewish exclusiveness, for the trade was considered unclean by the Pharisees, and those who wrought at it were required to dwell apart. A house "by the seaside" (chap. 10. 6) is still shown as the home of Peter, and may occupy the original site.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. Acts 9. 34.

**OUTLINE.**

- 1. Peter at Lydda. v. 32-35.
- 2. Peter at Joppa. v. 36-43.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M. Peter working miracles. Acts 9. 32-43.
- Tu. The paralytic healed. Mark 2. 1-12.
- W. The excellent woman. Prov. 31. 10-31.
- Th. Maintaining good works. Titus 3. 1-15.
- F. Life to the dead. Mark 5. 21-43.
- S. The resurrection and the life. John 11. 14-27.
- S. The prayer of faith. James 5. 10-20.

**Time.**—A.D. 39, at the close of the last lesson.

**Places.**—Lydda and Joppa, on the maritime plain of Palestine.

**Explanations.**—*Peter passed*—He visited the Churches through Palestine, to look after and direct them. *To the saints*—"The holy ones," the common name for Christians in the New Testament. *A certain man*—Nothing is known about him. *Palsy*—The paralysis, a disease making one entirely helpless. *Jesus Christ maketh thee*—Peter was careful to show that the power came from Jesus, and not from himself. *Make thy bed*—A mattress, spread on the floor. *All...turned to the Lord*—Meaning that very many became disciples of Jesus. *Joppa*—On the sea-shore, nine miles from Lydda. *Tabitha...Dorcas*—One is the Hebrew, the other the Greek word for "gazelle." *Full of good works*—One whose life was spent in doing good. *And alms-deeds*—Gifts to the poor. *Laid in an upper chamber*—The large room of the house, best fitted for the funeral. *They sent*—Not sure that he could bring her to life, but with a hope that perhaps he might. *The widows*—The poor women whom Dorcas had helped. *Showing the coats*—Clothing in general, whether for men or women, is meant. *Put them all forth*—That he might pray alone. *Opened her eyes*—Her spirit came back to her body. *Saw Peter*—Perhaps she had never seen him before. *Presented her*—Showed her.

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O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge,  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee,  
Thou wilt find a solace there.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. **Peter at Lydda**, v. 32-35. Who was Peter? Where did he go? For what purpose was this journey? To what place did he come? By what name are believers in Jesus here called? What does this name show as to their character? Whom did Peter find at Lydda? What did he say to him? What followed his words? How did this show Christ's power? What was the effect of this miracle? What is it to turn to the Lord?

2. **Peter at Joppa**, v. 35-43. What had taken place at Joppa? What is said of this woman's character? What is said of this Christian's duty in Titus 3. 8? What did they do after her death? Why did they send for Peter? What did he find when he came? Why was this woman so mourned? What did Peter do? What miracle was like this one? Matt. 5. 41, 42. What was the effect of this miracle?

#### TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

How does this lesson teach—

1. That there is power in the name of Jesus?
2. That there is power in prayer?
3. That there is power in faith?

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school). 1. Whom did Peter find at Lydda? A man sick of the palsy. 2. What did he say to him? "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." 3. What followed Peter's words? He became well at once. 4. What Christian had died at Joppa? A woman named Dorcas. 5. What is said of her? She was full of good works. 6. How was she restored to life? By the prayer of Peter.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—Good works.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **Peter at Lydda**, v. 32-35. What was Peter's business at Lydda? What act of healing did he perform? By whose authority was he acting? What was the spiritual effect of this miracle?

2. **Peter at Joppa**, v. 36-43. What is said of the character of Dorcas? What advice is given in Titus 3. 8? What happened to Dorcas? What message was sent to Peter? What testimony of her good deeds was given to Peter? How was Dorcas restored to life? Who were witnesses to her restoration? What result followed this miracle? Where did Peter make his abode?

#### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Wherein are we taught—  
The value of a useful and holy life?  
The value of a prompt and willing obedience  
to the call of suffering and grief?  
The hope of a resurrection?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where did Peter work a miracle? At Lydda. Where was Lydda? Twenty miles from Jerusalem. Who lived there? Enes, who had been sick eight years. What did Peter say to him? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.] What was Peter careful to do? To give all the glory to Jesus. What effect did this have upon the people? Many believed in Jesus. To what place was Peter urged to come at once? To Joppa. Who had just died there? Tabitha, a disciple of Jesus. Who mourned for Tabitha? Many poor people whom she had helped. What did Peter do when led into an upper chamber? He knelt and prayed. Had Peter power to work miracles? No; it was God's power working through him. What did he then say to the dead woman? "Tabitha, arise." What followed? She opened her eyes and sat up. What was the result of this miracle? Great joy and great faith. Where did Peter stay for many days? At the house of Simon, the tanner.

#### WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

Peter worked miracles because he had faith in Christ.

This faith is believing—

Not in yourself, but in God.

Not in your way, but in his way.

Not in having your will done, but in having his will done.

"All things are possible to him that believeth."

#### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE. Pictures of Discipleship.

##### I. UNITED DISCIPLES.

Peter passed through all quarters. v. 32.

"One body in Christ." Rom. 12. 5.

##### II. HOLY DISCIPLES.

The saints which dwelt at Lydda. v. 32.

"Be ye holy in all.... conversation." 1 Pet. 1. 15.

##### III. A WORKING DISCIPLE.

This woman was full of good works. v. 36.

"Filled with the fruits of righteousness." Phil. 1. 11.

##### IV. AN UNSELFISH DISCIPLE.

Alms-deeds which she did. v. 36.

"Lord. . . not forget your.... labor of love." Heb. 6. 10.

##### V. SORROWING DISCIPLES.

Widows stood by him weeping. v. 39.

"Sorrow not, even as others.... no hope." 1. Thess. 4. 13.

##### VI. A PRAYING DISCIPLE.

Kneeled down and prayed. v. 40.

"Ask what ye will.... shall be done." John 15. 7.

##### VII. REJOICING DISCIPLES.

He presented her alive. v. 41.

"Your sorrow.... turned into joy." John 16. 20.

#### ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

##### The Inspirations of the Gospel.

1. The Gospel inspires the spirit of unity, binding into one brotherhood all who believe in Christ. v. 32.
2. The Gospel inspires holiness, shown in the name "saints" applied to believers. v. 32.

3. The Gospel inspires strength and health to the body as an emblem of health to the soul. v. 34.

4. The Gospel inspires thought and love for others, especially of the needy. v. 36.

5. The Gospel inspires deeds of helpfulness and charity. v. 36.

6. The Gospel inspires such a character and life as leaves behind it a fragrant memory. v. 39.

7. The Gospel inspires a faith and power which is mightier than death. v. 40.

8. The Gospel inspires a brotherhood which counts all men alike before God. v. 43.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

10. *What is God's providence?*  
God's providence is his most holy, wise, and powerful preservation and government of all his creatures and all their actions.

His kingdom ruleth over all.—Psalm 103. 19.  
The very hairs of your head are all numbered.—Matthew 10. 30.

King of kings, and Lord of lords.—1 Timothy 6. 15.

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.—Psalm 76. 10.

#### ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

IN the last lesson we had the picture of a standard-bearer. In this we have a very different one—that of a shepherd. I suppose not a moment would be needed by most young people for the consideration of whether of these two they would rather be. We should find the boys, and, perhaps, many of the girls too, preferring the first. The idea of a shepherd's life is that of something quiet, monotonous, uneventful, and undistinguished. The life of an Eastern shepherd, however, involved dangers as real, and required courage as decided, as that of a standard-bearer, (see 1 Sam. 17. 34; Amos 3. 12,) and perhaps a Western shepherd might be able to say as much if he told all the risks that befall him from darkness, from snow-storms and snow-drifts, and from floods, in which shepherds have actually perished, verifying, by illustration, our Lord's words: "the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." And every boy who will one day become a father, and every girl who will one day become a mother, besides the numbers of those who are occupied with their own younger brothers and sisters or with the children of employers, ought to take some interest in the picture of a shepherd.

When our Lord would bestow on Peter a mark of entire forgiveness, trust, and favor, he appointed him to a shepherd's office: "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep." John 21. 15-17. It was sending him to tread in his own footsteps, who is the true "Shepherd of Israel."

We have seen Peter preaching to large crowds, witnessing for the council, bearing the "reproach of Christ," pronouncing terrible judgments on those who "lied to the Holy Ghost," and settling wisely and effectively the dispute between the Hellenist and Hebrew Christians. But

never do we see in him the image of the Master more perfectly than in the passage for to-day, where we read of his pastoral visits to the flock who had been scattered in the late persecution instituted by Saul. Chap. 8. 3, 4.

Peter "went through all parts." This was like his Master. It was no great and striking journey, no visiting of new and great scenes but just a quiet passing from place to place throughout Judea and Galilee, which he knew so well, wherever there were saints to be found. Just so had the Lord Jesus traveled from city to city and village to village, seeking the "lost sheep of the house of Israel."

But in thus passing from place to place he came across sickness and sorrow. At Lydda he finds a man bedridden for eight years, a poor, palsied, helpless creature. At Joppa, he finds a weeping multitude, bereaved of her who had been their friend and helper. Just so was it with our Lord. He passed in and out among the toiling, the weary, the suffering. He was sought of the sick and the troubled.

And Peter brought help to the sick and sorrowful. In this also like his Master. For where need came before Jesus, there his mercy flowed out. And the apostle, who followed so close that he knew his Lord's will, could proclaim the good news to the cripple: "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." And even more. Only twice after our Lord had left this earth do we hear of the dead being raised; once through the instrumentality of Paul (chap. 20. 9, 10), and once through that of Peter. For this no authority had been given after His resurrection (Comp. Matt. 10. 8; Mark 16. 18). But once through each of these chosen apostles he showed that he indeed still held "the keys of death and hades." And further:

Through this ministry of Peter life came to dead souls. "All that dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, (Eneas,) and turned to the Lord." This was not the result of Peter's preaching. It was the result of his going round, as an under-shepherd, to care for the flock, and thus following in his Master's footsteps. And herein was fulfilled the Lord's promise: "Greater works than these shall he do." (John 14. 12,) for never had the Master been cheered in his daily journeys by such large results.

Through each one cannot be a Paul, each one may bear a standard. And though each cannot be a Peter, each may do a little shepherding. A little child may care for one younger than itself, and thus grow into a tender, watchful shepherd. Never mind if the work look small. "I seem to do nothing at all," said a young nurse, "others get through so much, and I only mind the children, feed them, take them out, etc., and there is nothing to show for it." "That is a shepherd's work," was the answer, "It is following in the footsteps of Him who called himself the Good Shepherd." And no other human profession has been honored by our Lord's adopting the title springing from it as his own.

One who "shepherds" will constantly come across trouble and sorrow. There are tears to be wiped away, and disasters to be set right, and a true servant of the Lord will love to be a helper

and comforter of any, however poor and small. But what about higher results? Will the work, say, of a young nurse, be followed by "many turning to the Lord?" I was reading but the other day of a lonely nursery governess, who cared, as a true servant of Christ, for her young charges. Her prayers were heard, and one of them "grew up to be valiant for the truth," and the means of spiritual blessing to many. But what would her prayers have done if her work had been neglected? It is ours to do the daily work; God's prerogative to give, when and where he will, the rich blessing.

### BEREAN METHODS.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw the map of Palestine, showing the Plain of Sharon, locating Jerusalem, Lydda, and Joppa, and showing the direction of Peter's journey. . . . Note in this lesson the characteristics of disciples in the early church. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline.) . . . The inspiring power of the Gospel. (See Additional Practical Lessons.) . . . Peter's example: 1. Faithfulness in apostleship and ministry; 2. Interest in the Church; 3. Faith in Christ; 4. Lowliness of mind; 5. Breadth and freedom of views, v. 43. . . . The monument of Dorcas: 1. A monument of discipleship; 2. Of love; 3. Of unselfishness; 4. Of industry; 5. Of the love of others. . . . What does this lesson tell us to do? . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. Apostolic miracles. The cripple at the Beautiful Gate. Acts 3. The cripple at Lystra. Acts 14. The young man who slept in church. Acts 20. The father of Publius. Acts 28. . . . Two monuments stand side by side in a churchyard in Delaware. One is the marble tomb erected by the will of a politician, (celebrated in his life-time, but now almost forgotten), costing ten thousand dollars. The other is a Sunday-school building, put up and furnished at the expense of one man, still living, costing about the same amount. Which of these two is the better monument?

#### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The power of Jesus.*

INTRODUCTORY. Who was Peter? Whom did he preach? Where had he known Jesus? Had he ever seen him do any great works? What power had Jesus given to Peter and the other disciples? Let children briefly recall some of the wonderful works or "acts of Jesus." Tell them that now we are studying the "Acts of the Apostles," and we shall see how Jesus was still at work, though out of sight. Read, or let children help to recall, some of the instances where Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead, as the cure of the man who was let down through the roof of the house, and the raising of Jairus' daughter. Now we shall see what Jesus did through Peter.

1. Point out on the map Lydda, where Peter went when he was visiting the churches. It was not many miles from Jerusalem, and some people lived there who knew Jesus. See if children

know what a paralytic is. Tell them that he had been helpless for eight years. Let some child eight years old rise, and tell that as long as this child had lived in the world, so long had Eneas been sick. Read Peter's words to Eneas, and tell what followed, getting children's opinions as to why Peter healed him. Illustrate by the case of a physician who came to a city and did a wonderful cure. Others would want this same physician, would they not?

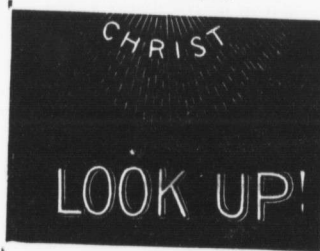


2. Ask if children have ever been in a house where some one had died. Describe the scene in the house of Dorcas—the grief of her friends—the many people whom she had helped and their sorrow. Tell that she had something in her heart which led her to do kind acts, and let children tell what it was, and from whom she received it. Tell what Peter did, what he said and to whom, and what then came back to the dead woman. Teach that he spoke to Jesus first, and then spoke to Dorcas. It was not Peter's power that raised Dorcas, but the power of Jesus, working through Peter.

3. Ask for different ways in which we can speak to our absent friends—by letter, telegraph, or telephone. Tell story of little girl who spoke to Jesus through the telephone, asking him to cure her little brother. He heard her and answered her prayer. But we do not need telegraph wires or a telephone. The prayer of the heart, and the real faith in a living Jesus, goes straight up to him. Will Jesus hear a child's prayer as quickly as the prayer of an apostle? Yes, and he will answer just as quickly.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



BLACKBOARD THOUGHTS. How did Peter work miracles? The secret of his power was faith in Christ and prayer to Christ. The source of power was in Christ, PETER LOOKED UP for help. He could do nothing of himself, but with faith and prayer combined he raised the dead to life. Let this be a lesson to every member of the school. Look up in time of trouble! Look up in time of temptation! Look up for power! Look up for purity! Look away from self, look up to Christ.

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