

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 26.]

OCTOBER, 1892.

[No. 10.]

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The book abounds in illustrations, the work of a Chinese artist, which gives to them added interest.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXVI.]

OCTOBER, 1892.

[No. 10.]

Nobody's Darlings.

Out in the cold, the pitiless cold,
And far away from the Shepherd's fold,
Nobody's darlings stray ;
The whole long day in the lonely street,
With shivering forms and naked feet,
They tramp their weary way.

No warm, soft bed when the nightfall comes ;
Only the stairs in the wretched slums,
Or doorsteps cold and drear,
For homeless, wandering waifs to sleep,
Where nobody's darlings wake to weep,
No loving mother near.

No blessed homes, where the children find
A refuge safe, and a welcome kind,
And hearts of tender love ;
Where somebody's darlings sleep at night,
In their snow-white coats, so clean and bright,
Sheltered like weary dove.

Nobody's darlings ! Gather them in ;
Poor little outcasts of want and sin,
Bring them into the fold ;
And tell them of God's bright home above,
Of its gates of pearl, its light, its love,
And streets of shining gold.

—The London Christian.

Extension of Business.

WITH his characteristic enterprise and energy the indefatigable Book Steward of our Toronto house has been, in Biblical phrase, "lengthening his cords and strengthening his stakes." During his recent visit to Great Britain, he was enabled to make arrangements whereby in connection with one other house, the old and reputable Copp, Clark Company, he becomes the

Canadian representative of one of the greatest and best known publishing houses in the world, the London Religious Tract Society. The imprint of this house on any book is a guarantee of the unimpeachable religious character of the book and of the high-class standard of mechanical and artistic excellence with which it is produced. We think no house in the world has contributed more to the popularization of wholesome religious literature. But, not only has it issued countless volumes for the million, it has also a catalogue of high-class standard works for the scholar, the critic and the cultured reader, as for instance, Sir William Muir's "Rise, Progress, and Fall of the Caliphate" reviewed elsewhere. With the sole agency of the famous publishing house of the Nelson's, in Edinburgh, the joint agency of the Religious Tract Society, the sole agency of the Cambridge University Bibles, of the Wesleyan Publishing House in London, and Methodist Book Concern in New York and Cincinnati, and with shelves laden with the best books of the other great publishing houses of Great Britain and the United States, the Methodist Publishing House, Toronto, offers to our ministers and book-reading people, and our Sunday-schools, the amplest range of popular and high-class literature from which to replenish their private or Sunday-school libraries.

Food for the mind is no less necessary than food for the body. Indeed, we think it is more so. We would greatly prefer plain living and high thinking to high living and low thinking. Parents owe to their families, they owe it to themselves, to see that while they feed and clothe their families comfortably, that they endeavor also to feed their minds with wholesome intellectual and religious food, that their souls may be nourished and grow thereby.

BUBBLES we buy with a whole soul's tasking ;
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

—Lowell.

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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, OCTOBER, 1892.

Those Sunday-school Libraries.

It is, we believe, a fact that the books in circulation in our Methodist Sunday-school Libraries, are more than all those in the Public and Mechanics' Institute Libraries in the Dominion. They form in many country districts almost the only literature except that of the newspapers, and sometimes not even excepting them. It is a fashion to sneer at Sunday-school books as being of inferior literary merit. The time for that sneer has happily past. Some of the best and most brilliant writers living find a scope for their talents in writing for the eager young minds in our Sunday-schools. Heba Stretton, Edward Garrett, Mrs. Charles, Miss C. M. Young, and many others whose names will occur to our readers at once.

Certain it is, that not merely the literary but the moral tone of the Sunday-school books are vastly superior to the paper covered literature to be found in the book stalls throughout the country. The great publishing houses of Great Britain and the United States, vie with each other in preparing high-class Sunday-school books. The Wesleyan Book Room and Sunday-school Union in England, the Religious Tract Society, the Methodist Book Concern, New York, the Congregational, Baptist, Presbyterian and other houses besides independent and undenominational houses present a noble catalogue of valuable books. The old-fashioned

"GOODY, GOODY" BOOKS,

have been largely succeeded by manly literature. Books of popular science, of interesting history, of religious, missionary and secular biography, of travel—especially in Bible Lands—make up a larger part of a good library than ever before. That list is embodied largely in the present catalogues of our Methodist Book Rooms. These catalogues contain thousands of bright, readable books at the choice of the purchasing school.

There is one difficulty, that is, that some of these books occur only in high priced editions, and are therefore only available for the more wealthy schools.

We would suggest that in addition to the periodical additions to the library—annual or more frequent—that a small sum be kept in the treasury for the purpose of ordering new and important books that may be especially attracting attention, and which are advertised in the *Guardian* or our Sunday-school periodicals, such as "Stalker's Life of Christ," "John Kemington, Martyr," etc.

KEEP UP A FRESH INTEREST.

The scope of our Sunday-school libraries could be greatly increased if the senior department existing in many of our schools were still more widely extended. In no way can a village or rural community get so good a value for their money as by raising \$50 or \$100 and ordering a selection of the best books in standard and current literature. We would suggest that the young people be requested to say what books they wanted. This would create an interest and lead them to examine the book list and to have a greater interest in the books when they came. Of course, a committee would have to decide as to the number and character of the books to be purchased.

There should be a selection of books on practical religion, such as James' "Anxious Inquirer," Binney's "How to Make the Best of Both Worlds," Dr. Wise's books of godly counsel, and other books of that sort. With these the teacher ought to be familiar, and with a kind and sympathetic word should recommend to his scholars at such times as he might judge that they would be most helpful in their religious life. We shall never forget the debt of gratitude which we owe to one of our early teachers, the late Robert Wilkes, for the recommendation of such books as these of Binney and James mentioned above, and others which were of great benefit at the time and have been ever since.

READING ROOMS.

We would suggest, too, that Sunday-schools or Epworth Leagues should, as far as possible, imitate the example of our friends in Bridge Street Church, Belleville, and other churches and schools which have a special, permanent

reading room, open the whole or part of the day or evening. It is all very well to say that young men and women should not gad about the streets in the evening, but should cultivate habits of reading and study. Very often, especially in the towns, they have no homes but a comfortable boarding-house, and not much interesting reading. If attractive reading rooms could be kept open with illustrated magazines and periodicals, they would do much to counteract the billiard room, the saloon, or the street corner, and woo many into sympathy with church life and church work, and lead to their great spiritual benefit. Many will read a bright attractive paper when they will not take up a book.

The rapid development of *Onward*, especially seems to show that it has met a felt want. The printed report of a year's progress shows how successful it is.

Schools replenishing their libraries may accomplish a great deal of good with their old books by sending them as a donation to the Sunday-school Aid Fund, to the Rev. Dr. Withrow, Secretary, Toronto. There are continual applications for such grants and they are a great boon to poor schools to whom over 50,000 copies have been sent within a few years. The Sunday-school Aid Fund will pay the cost of freight on all such books. In the vicinity of Montreal, such books might be shipped to Wesleyan Book Rooms, C. W. Coates, Bleury Street, Montreal, and in the Maritime Provinces, to the Rev. S. F. Huestis, Halifax.

Opening and Closing Services.

FOURTH QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. Silence.

II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool, for he is holy.

School. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Supt. O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.

School. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

III. Singing.

IV. The Apostles' Creed, or Ten Commandments.

V. Prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer for concert.

VI. Reading Scripture Lesson.

VII. Singing.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. Class Study of the Lesson.

II. Singing Lesson Hymn.

III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion by the school in concert.

IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. The Supplemental Lesson.

VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service, and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. Singing.

II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

School. To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Supt. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

III. Dismissal.

Book Notices.

An introduction to the Study of the New Testament. By J. H. KERR, M.A. With introduction by Professor BENJAMIN D. WARFIELD, D.D., of Princeton Theological Seminary. Chicago and New York: Fleming, Revell & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. xx. 353. Price, \$1.50.

The purpose of this book is to ascertain whatever is ascertainable in regard to the historical setting of the component parts of the New Testament. The order followed in the study of each book is Canoncity, Authority, Contents, Date, and Place of Composition and Peculiarities. The book is conservative in its tone, that is, adhering closely to the generally received views. The writer says, "I am personally convinced of the historicity and divine authority of the twenty-seven books which constitute the New Testament." The whole spirit of the volume is reverent, and while it considers only the human side of the New Testa-

(Continued on page 658.)

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FOURTH QUARTER.

A. D. 37.]

LESSON I. SAUL OF TARSUS CONVERTED.

[Oct. 2.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3. 3.

Authorized Version.

Acts 9. 1-20. [*Commit to memory verses 15-18.*]

1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Da-mas'-cus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Je-ru'-sa-lem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Da-mas'-cus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

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

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Je'sus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

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.

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

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 Da-mas'-cus.

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

10 And there was a certain disciple of Da-mas'-cus, named An'a-ni'-as; and to him said the Lord in a vision, An'a-ni'-as. 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 Ju'das for one called Saul, of Tar'sus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named An'a-ni'-as coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then An'a-ni'-as answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Je-ru'-sa-lem:

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

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gen'tiles, and kings, and the children of Is'-ra-el:

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

17 And An'a-ni'-as went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Je'sus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as

Revised Version.

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,

2 went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Da-mas'-cus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound

3 to Je-ru'-sa-lem. And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew night unto Da-mas'-cus: and suddenly there shone round about

4 him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him,

5 Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am

6 Je'sus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee

7 what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the

8 voice, but beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were

9 opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Da-mas'-cus.

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

11 Now there was a certain disciple at Da-mas'-cus, named An'a-ni'-as; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, An'a-ni'-as. And he said, Be-

12 hold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of

13 Ju'das for one named Saul, a man of Tar'sus: for he is praying; and he hath seen a man named An'a-ni'-as coming in, and laying

14 his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. But An'a-ni'-as answered, Lord, I have

15 heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Je-ru'-sa-lem: and here

16 he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. But the Lord said

17 unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gen'tiles and kings, and the children of Is'-ra-el:

18 for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. And An'a-ni'-as

19 departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the

20 Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled

21 with the Holy Ghost. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he re-

22 turned and followed me.

23 And he went down to Damascus, and abode with one Tarsus.

24 And after some days he opened his eyes, and he was baptized, and he rose up, and he was circumcised.

25 And he abode with them a certain number of days, and he departed, and he came to Jerusalem, and he abode with them.

26 And he was disputing with the Grecians, but he did not prevail.

27 And he was disputing with the Grecians, but he did not prevail.

it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Da-mas-cus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

ceived his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples 20 which were at Da-mas-cus. And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God.

TIME.—A. D. 37. **PLACE.**—Damascus, in Syria. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The witness of the Spirit.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Saul of Tarsus converted. Acts 9. 1-9.
Tu. Saul of Tarsus converted. Acts 9. 10-20.
W. Paul's declaration. Acts 22. 1-13.
Th. Paul before Agrippa. Acts 26. 9-33.
F. Manasseh converted. 2 Chron. 33. 9-16.
S. Called by grace. Gal. 1. 11-24.
S. Riches of grace. Eph. 2. 1-10.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 213, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Be it my only wisdom here.
- No. 216, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Nearer, my God, to thee.
- No. 219, New Canadian Hymnal.
 More love to thee, O Christ,

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 122, 127, 124.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. The Chief of Sinners, v. 1, 2.**
 Who was this Saul?
 How did he regard the disciples?
 What is meant by his "breathing out threatenings and slaughter?"
 What authority did he seek, and why?
 What prompted his mistaken zeal? (Acts 26. 9.)
 What authority could the high priest in Jerusalem have in Damascus?
- 2. The Saviour, v. 3-9.**
 What interrupted Saul's journey?
 What is a vision?
 How did the vision affect Saul?
 What revelation was made to him?
 What is meant by "kicking against the pricks?"
 What question shows his surrender?
 How did Saul continue his journey, and why?
 Of what blindness was Saul now rid?
 How does the ninth verse show his mental disturbance?
- 3. The Salvation, v. 10-20.**
 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?
 What is the GOLDEN TEXT?

Practical Teachings.

- Where in this lesson are we shown—
 God's infinite mercy to the sinful?
 Instant obedience to the divine call?
 The duty of doing something for Jesus?

Hints for Home Study.

- Find how David was convicted of his sin.
 Find how Isaiah was convicted of his sin.
 Find how Peter was convicted of his sin.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. The Chief of Sinners, v. 1, 2.**
 Who was this chief of sinners? (See 1 Tim. 1. 15.)
 By what name is he called in the lesson?
 What was his feeling toward the disciples of Jesus?
 What request did he make of the high priest?
 What did he afterward say of his conduct? (1 Tim. 1. 13.)
- 2. The Saviour, v. 3-9.**
 What journey did Saul make?
 What did he see near Damascus?
 How does he describe the light? (Chap. 26. 13.)
 How did it affect Saul?
 What did he hear?
 What question and answer followed?
 What did Saul ask about duty?
 What direction was given him?
 Who else heard the voice?
 What did Saul do?
 How did he get to Damascus?
 What was his condition for three days?
- 3. The Salvation, v. 10-20.**
 What disciple in Damascus had a vision?
 What was Ananias bidden to do?
 What vision had Saul seen?
 What did Ananias say about Saul?
 For what honor had the Lord chosen Saul?
 What must he be shown?
 What did Ananias do?
 What did he say?
 What followed?

What says the GOLDEN TEXT about what all need?

With whom did Saul remain?
What strange thing did he do?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. A lesson of faith?
2. A lesson of obedience?
3. A lesson of service!

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find, if you can, the first mention of Damascus in the Bible.

What leper once lived in Damascus?
What can you tell about another man named Ananias?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was helping to persecute the early Church?
Saul.

Where was he going now? **To Damascus.**
Whom did he go to arrest? **Believers in Jesus.**

What did he suddenly see? **A bright light.**
What did he hear? **A strange voice.**

Who was speaking to him? **The Lord Jesus.**
What did Jesus say to Saul? **Why persecutest thou me?**

What does this question show? **That Jesus and his disciples are one.**

What did Saul reply? **“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do!”**

Where did Jesus tell him to go? **Into the city.**

What had come upon Saul? **Blindness.**
How long did this last? **Three days.**
Who then came to him? **Ananias, a disciple of Jesus.**

What did he call Saul? **“Brother.”**
What was given back to him? **His sight.**
What else was given him? **The Holy Spirit.**
By what act did he show his new faith? **He was baptized.**

Words with Little People.

Saul's ill temper and cruelty to Christians was ill temper and cruelty to Christ himself.

Do we remember that our unkind words and our unkind acts really hurt Jesus, our Lord?

Whisper Question.

“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

General Statement.

While Philip journeys southward along the desert's rim, Saul of Tarsus is riding northward under Hermon's snowy heights. He is hastening to Damascus to destroy the disciples of the Nazarene. In what a tumultuous swirl must his thoughts have been as he rode. Doubtless he recalled those controversies in the synagogues of Jerusalem, when he had been worsted in arguments about this new doctrine, but in his anger remained unconvinced. Likely the glowing face of Stephen repeatedly rose before his eyes, and again he heard that dying cry of faith and prayer. But he presses deep convictions down. The towers of Damascus gleam before him under the noontide sun, when suddenly a brighter light flashes from the sky, a Form is revealed to his startled vision, and a Voice stirs the depths of his being. One moment's look, no more the defiant enemy, but the submissive disciple of Christ. Three days of agony slowly pass, then a Christian brother's hand is laid upon his brow, and he is invited to faith in Christ and supernatural peace. The scales fall from his eyes, and the cloud rises from his heart. He receives the token of baptism, and enters the company of disciples, henceforth to give all his energies to the cause of his new Master. He stands in the synagogue, not to denounce and arrest the followers of Jesus, but to proclaim his own faith in him as the Christ, and to relate his personal experience of salvation, while listening Jews are filled with amazement.

Verse 1. Saul. The fiery young zealot who led 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. **Threatenings and slaughter against** Christianity were his very soul's atmosphere, the breath of his life (Acts 22. 4; 26. 10, 11). **Went unto the high priest.** Probably Theophilus, a son of Hanan, the older high priest, who still held much power.

2. Desired of him. In this persecution Saul, not the high priest, was the moving power. **Letters.** Serving as passports for travel and authorization of his acts. The high priest was recognized by Roman law as the patron of Jews in all

lands, and the Sanhedrin the supreme authority over all religious questions. Yet probably the high priest could not have exercised such authority in Damascus as is here indicated but for the fact that there was at this time no Roman governor in Palestine, leaving the rule in the hands of the Sanhedrin. **Damascus.** One of the oldest cities of the world, one hundred and forty miles northeast from Jerusalem. There were probably many Jews there. **Synagogues** were not only meeting-places for Jewish worship, but centers of *rule*, since among the Jews "Church" and "State" were closely united. **This way.** Better "the way." Probably a term by which the Gospel was early known among friends and foes. **Bring them bound unto Jerusalem.** The murder of Stephen was a lurid indication of the treatment they might there expect. (1) *The worst deeds of the worst sinners may be overruled so as to work out God's plan.* The psalmist says, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee" (Psa. 75, 10). (2) *God shows his power and grace in transforming violent enemies into mighty workers.* (3) *The interests of true religion can never be advanced by cruelty.*

3. As he journeyed. It was a journey of five or six days. After crossing the Jordan either north or south of the Sea of Galilee, he followed the mountains. **Came near Damascus.** The city bursts upon the traveler's view with such beauty that it is said that Mohammed, beholding 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 Shekinah-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, but only Saul heard the words spoken. **Persecutest thou me?** Saul had not driven the nails or spear into Christ's body, yet the Saviour says "me," not "my people." (4) *Deep sympathy unites our Lord to his people.* (5) *Christ loves us individually; there could be no general providence or universal pardon if there were not special providences and individual pardons.* (6) *A humiliating recognition of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin" must precede conversion.*

5. Who art thou? The question shows that amid all his terror Saul fully retained his consciousness. **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. **To kick against the pricks.** Like an ox kicking against the goad, Saul had been fighting against the Spirit of God.

6. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? His surrender is complete. He does not yet know

what Jesus's will may be, but he is determined to do it. **Go into the city.** Damascus. **It shall be told thee.** He was to receive salvation as all receive it, through the instrumentality of a saved man. The narrative given in Acts 26, 16-18, is beautifully complementary of this. (7) *True repentance does not look toward the past, but toward the future.* (8) *True repentance leads to true consecration.* (9) *True repentance sets the penitent to work for God.*

7. Speechless. Paralyzed with fear. See 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. (10) *Whom the Lord designs for a special work he calls in a special way.*

8. Saw no man. "Saw nothing" (Revised Version), blinded by the dazzling light which had burst upon him. This probably left its effects on Paul, "the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6, 17), in weakness of sight, and perhaps constant pain.

9. Three days without sight. In agony of soul. Perhaps the visions of 2 Cor. 12, 1-4, took place at this time. (11) *One of the holy tasks of the divine Comforter in this world is to help men to think.*

10. Ananias. A private member of the Church, unknown to us but for this event. **I am here.** He knew the Lord, and needed not to ask, like Saul, "Who art thou?" (12) *Christ often uses lowly instrumentalities to accomplish great results.* (13) *Christ knows his own by name, however humble.*

11. Street . . . called Straight. At that time a magnificent avenue, lined with columns, now a narrow alley. **House of Judas.** Perhaps the name of an innkeeper. **Tarsus.** A city in Cilicia, on the Mediterranean, then one of the largest in the empire; now a town of twenty thousand people. (14) *Notice the precision with which the disciple is directed in the way of duty.* (15) *He who prays aright will not fail to find answer.*

12. 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.

13. Ananias answered. His answer showed the fullness and freedom of his fellowship with the Lord in venturing to tell all his fears. (16) *We should be on terms of intimate communion with the Lord. Thy saints.* "Thy holy ones."

15. Chosen vessel. The term "vessel" is used in the Bible for any implement. Paul was our Lord's selected tool or weapon.

17. Went his way. Reassured by the promise.

His hands. As the token of the imputation of power from one to another. **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. (17) *Jesus hath sent each of us to carry light and comfort to some poor sinners.*

18. As it had been scales. The substance which had incrustated over the eyes during their inflammation. **Was baptized.** And so initiated into fellowship with Christ.

19. Received meat. "Took food." **Disciples . . . at Damascus.** These were Jews 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 counseled. **Preached Christ.** Rather, "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. (18) *It is easier to do duty "straightway" than after delaying.* (19) *Those who have been Christ's open enemies have all the more need to be his pronounced friends.* (20) *Every Christian should be a worker.* (21) *The testimony of experience is always the clearest and most powerful to influence others.*

CRITICAL NOTES.

BY PROFESSOR CHARLES F. BRADLEY, D.D.

Verse 1. Breathing threatening and slaughter. The expression in the original is even stronger than this. His very breath was menace and murder. In 26. 11, Paul says that he was "exceedingly mad" against the saints. The writer once heard Professor Park, of Andover, say that, although Paul "lived in all good conscience" before his conversion and verily thought he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus," yet, however conscientious in regard to the things he was doing, he must have had at least secret misgivings about the manner and spirit in which he was doing them.

2. Letters to Damascus unto the synagogues. These letters from the high priest and the chief priests associated with him (verse 14 and 26. 12) gave Saul authority to bind and bring to Jerusalem all that called upon the name of Jesus (verse 14). In accordance with the usual Roman policy of tolerance and indulgence toward the religious and judicial customs of subject peoples, the high priest and Sanhedrin exercised a somewhat vaguely defined but considerable authority over Jews outside of Judea. The relative nearness of Damascus (less than one hundred and fifty miles), and the large number of Jews living there, would tend to strengthen this authority there. In the time of Nero the Romans massacred ten thousand Jews in Damascus (Josephus, *Jewish Wars ii*, 20. 2). In planning this slaughter the Romans could not, Josephus says, trust their own wives, because these "were almost all of them addicted to the Jewish religion." The history of this ancient city (Gen. 15. 2) records many awful scenes of bloodshed. In the massacre of 1860 no fewer than six thousand Christians are said to have been murdered within the walls.

3. A light out of heaven. With this verse begins the narrative of Saul's conversion, one of

the dominant events in the world's history. The three accounts of this great transformation present a problem similar to many in the synoptic gospels, where the same occurrences are described by two or three of the evangelists with some variations. The peculiarity in the present instance consists in the fact that the same writer is recorder of the three varying accounts. In 22. 6-16, Paul, from the castle stairs, relates to the mob in the temple the story of his conversion. In 26. 12-20, the apostle includes the wonderful story in his defense before King Agrippa. A critical comparison of these three versions reveals variations relating to the actions and experiences of Paul's companions, and others relating to the words of Jesus. Those of the former class refer to unimportant details and are readily reconciled. Luke writes, in 9. 7, that "the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice [margin, "sound"], but beholding no man." In 26. 14, Paul says, "When we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice," etc.; and in 22. 9, "They that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." The slight discrepancies here are at the most not sufficient to discredit a witness who sought to recall such amazing experiences; but it should be considered that the falling down of the companions is described as happening at the instant the overwhelming light appeared. They then seem to have arisen to their feet, while Saul remained upon the ground. His companions heard the sound, but could not distinguish the words which were spoken. It was mere sound, and not a voice, to them. In like manner they saw the blinding light, but they did not see Jesus, although he appeared to Saul (verse 17 and 26. 16). As to the words spoken by Jesus, they are reported here and in chapter 22 with insignificant variations. But

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in 26. 16-18, Paul gives, as though it were a direct commission from Jesus spoken on the Damascus road, the charge which he received three days later through Ananias. The most simple and satisfactory explanation of this is that Paul did not deem it wise or necessary to go into all the details before Agrippa, and, in condensing his narrative, properly described words spoken by the servant and agent of Jesus as if they were his own personal commission. Such abbreviation seems entirely warranted. On the other hand, such variations as these should warn us against an unnaturally rigid interpretation of every phrase in sacred history.

10. The Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. From verse 12 we learn that Saul had "seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him." Both men were prepared for their coming interview by heavenly visions. Ananias certainly had prejudices against Saul which needed to be removed, and it seems not improbable that Saul, too, needed to be made willing to receive divine healing and revelation at the hands of an obscure believer. A parallel instance of a pair of visions fitting two men for a critical interview is found in the next chapter—the visions of Cornelius and Peter.

19. He was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. With this statement and that of the succeeding verse, "straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus," it is interesting to compare Paul's account in his letter to the Galatians (1. 15-17). In this epistle Paul is defending his claims as an apostle who had received an immediate revelation of Christ and commission from him against the false charges of his enemies. He writes: "When it was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas." The word translated "straightway" in Acts 9. 20, is the same as tant rendered "immediately" in Gal. 1. 16. The sojourn in Arabia either preceded all Paul's preaching in Damascus, in which case its true place in this narrative would be between verses 19 and 20; or it was included in the period which is vaguely described in verse 23 by the words "many days." Luke gives a rapid sketch of the outward events in Paul's career, while the apostle himself is recording the crises of his inner history. The visit to Arabia was perhaps brief, and was of no special moment to Luke's narrative. But from Paul's point of view that period of communion with God and his own soul was of vital importance.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What were the "pricks" against which Saul was kicking?*

The "goad" was the Spirit of God speaking through his conscience, but obscured by diverted attention to other ideas of duty. It might be called the conscience of semiconsciousness, of which many are still possessed. It is nevertheless persistent. Saul must have had some misgivings in going contrary to the advice of his revered instructor, Gamaliel (Acts 5. 34-39), and must have felt the "goad" on beholding the death of Stephen. The strong principle in Saul's being was duty, but it was dominated by a wrong preconceived idea of action (Acts 22. 3, 4; 26. 9), the result of education. It was a conflict of ideas in a man of strong will and intense individuality. He only needed greater illumination to see his error. He was illuminated gloriously, when he at once inquires, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

1. His natural aversion to the work of a persecutor. It takes hard-hearted men to persecute. Saul was, by nature and education, tender hearted.
2. The reasoning of his old teacher weighed upon him (Acts 5. 34-40).
3. The example of relatives who had become Christians (Rom. 16. 7).
4. Stephen's argument in the synagogue, his address before the council (Acts 6. 9-10; 7. 2-53), and his subsequent triumphant death (Acts 7. 59-60) convinced Saul of the divinity of the Christian religion.
5. His conscience.

The "goad" against which Saul kicked was "conviction for sin" so intense that resistance was vain. This conviction rested on certain facts:

1. He had done evil to the saints at Jerusalem (verse 13; chap. 22. 19, 26; 10).
2. He had threatened all disciples of Jesus (verse 1), and deliberately obtained authority to hunt them in strange cities (verse 14; chap. 26. 11), especially Damascus (chap. 9. 2).
3. He had witnessed against the first martyr, Stephen, and consented to his death (chap. 22. 20). The signal miracle (chap. 9. 9) and the vision of the crucified Lord (chap. 9. 17; 26. 16) showed him that Jesus whom he persecuted was the Christ. The goadings of conscience were well nigh irresistible.—*See*

The "pricks" or goads against which this ox had been kicking were the qualms or remonstrances of conscience. Saul had many misgivings, which he endeavored to stifle, as to the righteousness of his doings. The dying prayer of Stephen followed him, and the noble bearing of the inoffensive saints he was dragging to prison deeply impressed him. These inward conflicts with himself, with his better nature, with the Holy Spirit,

drove him to greater outrages, which, in turn, only made him more trouble in the silent hours when he was forced to think.

Jesus was so blameless in life, wise in teaching, wonderful in working (John 10. 25, 27), unique in conformity to the prophetic word, as to convince the people that he was "the son of David." Disclaiming a Hebrew crown, asserting divine Sonship, dying as an evil doer, declared alive again with power, he wrought in his disciples a unique contagion of courage, power, and purity, so energizing the testimony with which Stephen sealed his dying confession as to penetrate Saul's Pharisaic armor. By these strokes of conviction did the Lord of Glory convince and train Saul to receive the message which afterward led him to recognize Jesus as Lord of Glory.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Steps of Saul's Conversion.

I. ENMITY.

Breathing out threatenings. v. 1.

"Dead in trespasses," Eph. 2. 1.

"Ignorantly in unbelief." 1 Tim. 1. 13.

II. CONVICTION.

It is hard for thee. v. 5.

"Awake, thou that sleepest," Eph. 5. 14.

"Will remove.... of sin." John 16. 8, 9.

III. DECISION.

What wilt thou have? v. 6.

"What must I do?" Acts 16. 30.

"I will arise and go," Luke 15. 18.

IV. PENITENCE.

Neither did eat nor drink. v. 9.

"Sacrifices.... a broken spirit." Psa. 51. 17.

"Rend your heart.... and turn." Joel 2. 13.

V. PRAYER.

Behold, he prayeth. v. 11.

"Seek ye the Lord." Isa. 55. 6.

"Call upon me." Jer. 29. 11, 12.

VI. SALVATION.

Received sight forthwith. v. 18.

"Shined in our hearts." 2 Cor. 4. 6.

"We have peace with God." Rom. 5. 1.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Revelation of Christ in Saul's Conversion.

1. Christ is here revealed as a living, divine personality. (Verses 4, 5.)

2. Christ is revealed as having knowledge and notice of men as individuals, and their acts. (Verses 4, 5.)

3. Christ is revealed as having a deep interest in his Church, and a close sympathy with it. (Verse 5.)

4. Christ is revealed as having an omniscient knowledge of the heart of man, with all its struggles and emotions. (Verse 5.)

5. Christ is revealed as directing the labors of his people, assigning to each his work. (Verses 11, 15.)

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

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

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

This religion of the Nazarenes, of how much worth is it? Saul, the haughty persecutor, has a very small opinion of it. He regards it as a religion for weak people, for poor, foolish, deceived fanatics! As for himself, Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee of culture, this religion of Jesus is a matter worthy of very little consideration. It will soon pass away. No strong man bows to it. It only leads to blasphemy, even as it betrayed that weak-headed Stephen, whose robes were laid at Saul's feet when Stephen died the blasphemer's death. Away with fanaticism and blasphemy! Let nothing divert Saul, the man zealous for the old way! In his loyalty to those ancient paths he is now traveling to Damascus to bind and drag pestilential fanatics off to Jerusalem. On he steadily journeys, one of that party you can see in the dusty Damascus road. And there is the city ahead—how beautiful, that queen amid her leafy gardens and tinkling fountains! Soon through her ancient gates Saul will be riding, haughty defender of the old faith and despiser of the fanatical Nazarene. But suddenly, O the sharp, dazzling, blinding glare that smites Saul down to the earth! He falls as if a sword-stroke had leveled him. And then, like a lightning flash cutting through his bewilderment, echoes a mysterious voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

The terrified Saul dares not look up. He is bowed as if a simoon were going over him. He anxiously, beseechingly cries, "Who art thou, Lord?" And then with strained ears, in awful bewilderment, he listens.

O, searching, solemn voice that answers, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest!"

What, Jesus the despised one, Jesus humbling this man of might, sending him to his knees as a beggar, wringing out of his proud soul that suppliant cry to know what the Nazarene would have Saul, the great zealot, do? Yes; and he takes orders from Jesus and rises to go to Damascus, just as the Nazarene bids!

But while all this is going on what consterna-

tion there is among Saul's companions! They heard the strange, awful, commanding voice, but they have beheld no form of any speaker. All that they see is the pitiful, huddled form of the persecutor, who fell as before a lance thrust. He is getting up now and he stands on his feet, but O, so weak and confused and trembling! And does he hold out his hands in an entreaty for help? What, can he not see? "Blind, blind!" they whisper in terror. They almost fear to touch him. How strange an interruption of their journey! But there is Damascus, and they must enter it. Saul must be led too; and by the hand, as if a tiny child, this blind Saul is taken, and the strange procession, in a grave, excitable awe, passes through the grim, stony gateway of the ancient city.

Three days go by—three days of darkness in Saul's lodging house, three days of profound sorrow for his sins, of cries to God for mercy. Look into Saul's room. That abject, sorrowful figure down in the dust, crying out in the dark to Jesus—would you think it was the man of pride riding out of Jerusalem's gate a short time ago? O what darkness and remorse! But across it all moves a beautiful dream, a pathway of light, a way of joy, and in it is the form of one approaching to lay hands on the blinded eyes and give sight. And hark! A step is heard! A compassionate voice makes its sweet music, "Brother Saul!" And at the cooling touch of Ananias's hands laid on the fevered eyes in the name of Jesus Saul comes into the light again, the peace and joy of the Holy Ghost filling his soul. What a happy going to baptism that very hour! What an after-feast of love! And then one day, in Damascus's wondering synagogues, a voice is raised, clear, earnest, strong, for Jesus! Now praised be God, it is Saul, the once proud persecutor, speaking for his new, loving, kingly Master.

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

Saul of Tarsus converted. The celebrated Gilbert West and his friend, Lord Lyttleton, determined to expose the cheat of the Bible. Mr. West chose the resurrection of Christ and Lord Lyttleton the conversion of St. Paul for hostile criticism. They began their task full of prejudice and contempt for Christianity. At the end they came together, not, as they expected, to exult over an imposture exposed, but to lament their own folly, and to congratulate each other that they were proving to themselves and to others that the Bible is the word of God.—*J. G. Vaughan.*

Verses 3. This light the Jews had called the Shekinah, or glorious presence of Jehovah. It was the sacred light which their fathers knew so

well. It was the light which blazed out in the flaming sword; which appeared to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees; that was seen by Moses in the burning bush; that shone out in the pillar of fire, and compassed the top of Sinai; that dwelt in the tabernacle and in the temple; that kindled the fire on Solomon's altar; that four hundred years left the earth, but reappeared at Bethlehem to the shepherds and wise men, at Christ's baptism, at the transfiguration, at Pentecost, at Stephen's martyrdom, and at Patmos. Such is the history of this wondrous light, the representation of Him who is the light of the world. The history of the light is the Christology of Scripture.
—*Horatio Bonar.*

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The name of Rothschild is mighty in the commercial world; Edison's name is mighty in the scientific world; Irving in the literary world, Wellington in the military world, but where can there be found a name so potent to lift and thrill and arouse and bless as the name of Jesus? To-day it holds a hundred million souls under omnipotent spell. That name in England means more than Victoria; in Germany it means more than Emperor William. O, mighty name!—*Talmage.*

Verses 6. Submission before salvation. A man while bathing in the ocean got beyond his depth, and while struggling to save himself an expert swimmer was urged to hasten to his rescue. "No," said he, "he is not yet drowned enough." When the drowning man gave up his struggles the good swimmer brought him safely to the shore. Afterward the expert explained: "As long as he felt strong enough to save himself he would in his struggles have pulled both of us down. But when he was drowned enough to let me do with him what I pleased I could easily bring him ashore."

Verses 13, 14, 15. Ruskin, in his *Ethics of the Dust*, calls our attention to the silent forces of nature, which never appear so grand as when they transmute baser materials into higher forms. We see the pool of slime transformed by the action of light and heat, repose and quiet, so that the clay hardens into blue sapphire, the sand into burning opal, the soot into flashing diamond; and even Jesus never appears so glorious in loveliness as when we see him transforming the very filth and slime of society into gems fit to burn and shine in an immortal crown.—*A. T. Pierson.*

The Teachers' Meeting.

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—

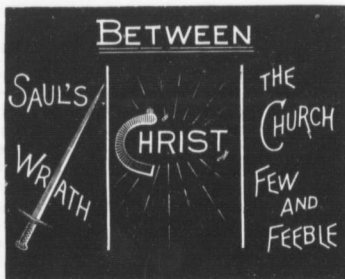
voice, light, appearance, visions, etc.; (2) The human instrumentality—Ananias; (3) The steps of his salvation....The divine transformation.... Christ as revealed in Saul's conversion....Lessons concerning salvation: (1) The power of salvation; (2) The breadth, extent of salvation; (3) The humble instrumentality; (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. (4) A man in close fellowship with Christ (verses 13. 14). (5) An obedient worker....Illustrate by Goliath's sword, turned from opposition to God's people to service; Voltaire's printing press in Switzerland, afterward 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.

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Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The diagram on the board is intended to teach the abiding care of the Lord for his Church. Between Saul and his wrath, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the infant church at Damascus, was Christ. Bring this out in a brief review of the lesson, and also apply it to the individual. He cares for his people; he cares for me. In addition to the above is herewith presented an analytical blackboard exercise. Write

the name of Saul. Then outline a large letter C, and by means of questions and answers bring out the following:

SAUL'S CHARACTER—Strong, upright.
ONSCIENCE—Ignorant.
ONVICTION—Conscious of error.
ONVERSION—Acceptance of Jesus.
ONSECRATION—Immediate, full.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN MARGER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *From Darkness to Light.*

Introductory Talk. Make word-picture of Stephen's martyrdom—the crowd of angry men looking on while sharp, deadly stones are hurled at the brave witness who dares declare that Jesus is the Son of God! See! here is Saul among the lookers-on. Stephen's clothing had been laid at his feet before the stoning began. He is glad to see Stephen die! Why? Because he hates the name of Jesus, and wants all who love that name to die. Talk a little about Saul, the bright young scholar full of zeal for his religion, and not willing to believe that Jesus was the world's Saviour. Tell how he had been persecuting the Christian believers in Jerusalem, and now goes to the high priest to get authority to go to Damascus and see if he can find any of the hated Christians, and bring them bound to Jerusalem to be punished, perhaps killed, as Stephen was.

To be taught: 1. That the old heart is dark and loves evil. 2. That the new heart is given by God and loves the light. 3. That Jesus is always ready to turn any heart that will obey from darkness to light.

1. [Pin to the board a heart cut from black paper.] Teach that Saul's was the old heart which loves sin. This book—whose word is it? Yes, it is God's holy word, and it cannot lie—says that this old heart, or the heart unchanged by Jesus, is "the enemy of God." But Saul was a Jew. He had been taught to keep the law of God, and would have said he was the friend of God. Whom was he persecuting? Yes, the disciples of Jesus, and when one of Jesus's friends is hurt it is the same as hurting him. So it was really Jesus-God come down to earth whom Saul was persecuting! [Print with white crayon "Hate" on the black heart.] Saul hated Jesus. But he loved himself and his own way. [Print "Self-love."] Did Saul kill Stephen? No; he did not throw the stones, but he encouraged others to throw them, and looked on with pleasure. He had murder in his heart. [Print "Murder."]

"Was not this a dark heart? Who wants a heart in which such evil things can grow? Yet they do grow in the heart that has not been changed by Jesus.



2. [Pin up a paper sword.]
See Saul riding toward Damascus with these evil thoughts in his dark heart! God was looking into that sinful heart. When we are going in our own way God is looking at us with love and pity. He is calling us to stop and hear his voice as he called Saul. Do we want to hear him?

Proud Saul carrying his sword of vengeance must be stopped. God knows how to send the light that will crowd out the darkness.

[Tell the story of the marvelous light and the conversation between Jesus and Saul. Tell how the darkness of Saul's heart began to go away as soon as he saw the light and began to walk in it, or to obey.]

Has Jesus sent any bright light to show us the way? [Uncover picture of a Bible and of a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, both shining for us all the time.]

3. Sing "Jesus loves me," and teach that the little children to-day are just as dear to Jesus as was Saul. He loves everybody and wants every little heart to be open to his beautiful light. How can a child open his heart to God's light? Just as Saul did—by obeying the words of Jesus.

Here is a beautiful word of his: "Follow me." That means, try to do as Jesus did.

Here is another: "Love one another." Who will try to obey Jesus?

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Why do you wait?
Jesus, my Saviour.

Love divine, all love excelling.
I've found a joy in sorrow.
Keep me, hide me, O my Father.

No. 2.

Sing the praise.
The praying spirit breathe.
Tenderly our Father.
O, my Saviour!
You're longing to work.

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.
6. Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT. **"Except a man," etc.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

38. What is the Spirit's work in believers?
He enlightens their minds to understand the Scriptures; bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God; helps their prayers; and purifies them from inward and outward sin; and fills their hearts and lives with perfect love and every grace.

A. D. 39.]

LESSON II. DORCAS RAISED TO LIFE.

[Oct. 9.]

GOLDEN TEXT. This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. Acts 9. 36.

Authorized Version.

Acts 9. 32-43. [Commit to memory verses 40-42.]

32 And it came to pass, as Pe'ter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwell at Lyd'da.

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

34 And Pe'ter said unto him, E'ne-as, Je'sus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

35 And all that dwelt at Lyd'da and Sa'ron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Jop'pa a certain disciple named Tab'i-tha, which by interpretation is called Dor'cas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she

Revised Version.

32 And it came to pass, as Pe'ter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lyd'da. And there he found a certain man named E'ne-as, which had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Pe'ter said unto him, E'ne-as, Je'sus Christ health thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that dwelt at Lyd'da and in Sha'ron saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Jop'pa a certain disciple named Tab'i-tha, which by interpretation is called Dor'cas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick,

was sick, and died : whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lyd'da was nigh to Jop'pa, and the disciples had heard that Pe'ter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

39 Then Pe'ter 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 Dor'eas made, while she was with them.

40 But Pe'ter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed ; and turning *him* to the body said, Tab'i'-tha, arise. And she opened her eyes : and when she saw Pe'ter, she sat up.

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 Jop'pa ; and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass that he tarried many days in Jop'pa with one Si'mon a tanner.

and died : and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And as Lyd'da was nigh unto Jop'pa, the disciples, hearing that Pe'ter was there, sent two men unto him, intreating him, Delay not to come on unto us.

39 And Pe'ter arose and went with them. And 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 Dor'eas made, while she was with them. But Pe'ter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed ; and turning to the body, he said, Tab'i'-tha, arise. And she opened her eyes ; and when she saw Pe'ter, she

41 sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up ; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Jop'pa ; and many believed on the Lord. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Jop'pa with one Si'mon a tanner.

TIME.—A. D. 39. **PLACES.**—Lydda and Joppa, on the maritime plain of Palestine. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The power of prayer.

HOME READINGS.

M. Dorcas raised to life. Acts 9. 32-43.

Tu. Care for the poor. Deut. 15. 7-11.

W. The good Samaritan. Luke 10. 25-37.

Th. Doing good. Gal. 6. 1-10.

F. Helping the poor. Job 29. 11-16.

S. Rich in good works. 1 Tim. 6. 17-21.

S. Poor for our sakes. 2 Cor. 8. 1-9.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 168, New Canadian Hymnal.

There is work to do for Jesus.

No. 171, New Canadian Hymnal.

Go labor on ; spend, and be spent.

No. 184, New Canadian Hymnal.

There are lonely hearts to cherish

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 90, 91, 92.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **The Palsied Healed**, 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 ? (Verse 35.)

To what special uses of miracle-working can you point ?

2. **The Dead Raised**, v. 36-43.

What proofs do we find that Dorcas had a loving heart ? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What that the disciples had loving hearts ?

What happened to Dorcas ?

What message was sent to Peter ?

What sort of people did he find gathered together in the upper chamber where Dorcas's body lay ?

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.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The value of a useful and holy life ?

2. That no true Christian is regardless of the poor ?

3. The value of a prompt and willing obedience to the call of suffering and grief ?

4. That the sick, crippled, and bereaved have special claims on our sympathy ?

5. That Christian influence outlives death ?

6. The hope of a resurrection ?

7. That holy living is a surer proof of Christianity than even raising the dead ?

Hints for Home Study.

Ascertain in what province were Lydda and Joppa, and how far Peter now was from his home in Jerusalem.

There are several incidental indications of the earnest benevolence of the early Christian Church—its loving care for the distressed ; give to your teacher a penciled list of some of these indications.

What sad fact in ancient civilization is pointed to by the frequent mention of widows in the Bible ?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. The Palsied Healed, v. 32-35.**
 To what city did Peter journey?
 What people did he there visit?
 What sick man did he find?
 How long had the man been ill?
 Of what trouble?
 What did Peter say to him?
 What did the man at once do?
 What effect had the cure on the people?
 What is meant by "turned to the Lord?" (See Isa. 55. 7.)

- 2. The Dead Raised, v. 36-43.**
 Who was dead at Joppa?
 How is the woman described? (GOLDEN TEXT.)
 What did the disciples do after Dorcas died?
 Why did they send for Peter?
 What did Peter find when he came?
 Why was this woman mourned?
 What did Peter do and say?
 What at once followed?
 Then what did Peter do?
 What similar miracle was wrought by a prophet? (2 Kings 4. 32-36.)
 What one by the Saviour? (Luke 8. 49-55.)
 Where did Peter lodge in Joppa?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. The power of Christ?
2. The power of faith?
3. The power of prayer?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Try to make a list of all the cases of dead people restored to life mentioned in the Bible.
 What was the first miracle that Peter performed?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- Who was Peter? **An apostle of the Lord.**
 To what place did he go? **To Lydda.**
 What miracle did he work there? **He cured a sick man.**
 How long had the man been sick? **Eight years.**
 Whom did Peter say made the sick man whole?
Jesus Christ.
 What did many people at Lydda do? **Turned to the Lord.**
 Where did Peter go next? **To Joppa.**
 What good woman there had just died? **Dorcas.**
 Who mourned for Dorcas? **Many poor people.**
 What did Peter do when he came to her room?
He prayed.
 What did he then bid the dead woman do?
Rise.
 What followed? **She sat up.**
 Did Peter do this miracle? **No; Jesus in Peter did it.**
 What was soon known throughout Joppa?
This miracle.
 What was the result? **Many believed.**

Words with Little People.

Jesus worked through Peter, curing a sick man and raising a dead woman to life.
 Jesus works through simple-hearted believers now.
 Little Mary's patience and love led her father to Jesus. Jesus worked through Mary because she let him.

Whisper Motto.

"I will look up."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

The persecution described in our last lesson culminated soon after Saul's conversion, and in the years following the Gospel spread, and the churches "had rest throughout all Judea and Samaria, and were edified." Saul, after escaping from Damascus, retired to Arabia, and when at the close of three years he again visited Jerusalem he had ceased to be a "sensation." For the Emperor Caligula had resolved to set up his statue in the temple, and the Jews were so indignant and frightened by his attempt that Jerusalem was needed that the purity of the Gospel might be preserved, and Peter, the chief of the apostles, traveled among the churches, bringing encouragement and counsel. At Lydda, twenty-five miles from Jerusalem, he wrought a miracle of healing which arrested universal attention and brought the whole village to the Lord. At Joppa, nine or ten miles away, he entered the chamber where the beloved Dorcas lay in death, and, gently bidding the women depart who had gathered around to mourn over her who had been so helpful to them, knelt alone by the dead, prayed, and then, in his Master's name, called her back to life.

Verse 32. As Peter passed throughout all quarters. Not hiding from persecution, but on a tour of inspection and supervision. Jerusalem was still the headquarters of the faith,

but we find Christians in Damascus and Antioch, and it is clear that the apostles sought to obey their Lord's command to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel." This visit, however, was

one of supervision of converts already made, rather than of missionary endeavor. The apostles probably made many such visits to remote groups of disciples; for only thus could uniformity of doctrine be maintained at a time when neither gospels nor epistles were written. **He came down.** From the high land of Jerusalem to the low plain by the shore. **To the saints.** The "holy ones;" those set apart for God's service. This term probably had its origin in Hebrew worship, but was early adopted by the Christians as descriptive of what disciples of Christ should be.

(1) *God's people have the privilege of holiness.* **At Lydda.** The ancient town of Lud, on the plain of Sharon; about a day's journey from Jerusalem. The church there had been probably founded by Philip the evangelist. (2) *The work abides after the worker departs.*

33. A certain man. Doubtless other miracles, as marvelous as this, were performed, which have not been recorded; but the results which flowed from this led the historian to tell the story here. **Eneas.** Probably, but not certainly, a disciple. The name is a variation of the name of the poet Virgil's hero. Dr. Glog notices that Peter found this man; "he was led to him by divine Providence, not by chance." **Kept his bed eight years.** A confirmed invalid. **Palsy.** Paralysis and nerve diseases in many aggravated forms are frequent in the East. This is partly due to climatic conditions; partly to the awful inheritance of ancestral sins against the body which comes to those whose very religious impulses have been diverted to vicious ends. (3) *The sick and crippled have special claims on our sympathy.*

34. Peter said. Peter is careful to show that the power he is about to exert is not of himself. Our Lord, on the contrary, invoked no name higher than his own. **Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.** "Jesus the Messiah health thee." (4) *The true Christian displays Christ, not himself.* This victim of paralysis had probably been troubled, directly or indirectly, in all his organs; now he is made "every whit whole;" no effect of disease lingers. **Make thy bed.** Literally, "spread for thyself." The bed was a roll of matting or carpet spread upon the floor. Eneas's activity would prove that he was really cured. **Arose immediately.** Whether Christian, Jew, or Pagan, Eneas had faith in God and in Jesus. (5) *Christ can make the entire man complete and whole.*

35. All that dwelt at Lydda. Probably not every individual, but the people in mass. **Saron** is the beautiful plain in which Lydda stood. **Saw him.** After the healing. **And turned to the Lord.** The miracle called attention to Peter's doctrines, led to faith in Jesus, and soon the Gospel became dominant in the commu-

nity. The prime purpose of miracles was to awaken popular interest. They were God's advertisements.

36. Joppa. An ancient town, from time immemorial the seaport of Palestine. It is now called *Jaffa*, and has about fifteen thousand inhabitants. **Disciple** originally meant "learner," with especial reference to one who learns by companionship with a teacher. **Tabitha . . . Dorcas.** One is the Hebrew, the other the Greek word meaning "Gazelle." Both names would be used in a mixed population; and as names in the East are given to represent traits of person or character, these may indicate that this woman had beauty of person as well as of character. **Full of good works.** Love to Christ inspired love for others. It always does. **Almsdeeds.** Works wrought especially for the poor. The Christian who disregards the poor is no Christian at all; and this holds as true of paupers in morals as of paupers in dollars. The "filth and scouring of the world," the outcasts from society, are especially attractive to Christ and to all who are like him. (6) *Good works are the outgrowth of discipleship.* (7) *Benevolence was one of the first spheres of opportunity opened for women by Christianity.* Emphasize this; but remember, (a) it is not the only sphere open to woman now, (b) benevolence is as binding on men as on women.

37. Sick, and died. (8) *God sometimes takes his people to heaven when, to our eyes, they seem most needed in this world.* **When they had washed.** According to Jewish custom; in this case an evidence that she was really dead. **Laid her 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 to Joppa. Nine miles distant. They had heard of the healing of Eneas, and cherished hope. (9) *Too late to send for a physician, but not too late to send for an apostle.*

39. Peter arose and went. Perhaps not knowing whether his ministry would be to comfort the mourners or remove their sorrow. **The widows stood by.** They needed not to him mourners here. **The coats.** The tunics or under-garments. **Garments.** Outer mantles. **Which.** The original means "how many," "what a quantity." They had lived in chronic astonishment at the largeness of her bounty. **Which Dorcas made.** There was no relic-worship here. These "coats and garments" were all "out at service." They were the "almsdeeds which she did." (10) *"This is the best epitaph, the tears of the poor."*—Robertson.

40. Put them all forth. That he might concentrate himself in prayer. **Tabitha, arise.** As a Hebrew, he spoke her Hebrew name. He is not reported to have invoked the name of Jesus in

the miracle, but doubtless he had addressed him in his prayer. Every prayer is answered; but not all answers are as much in harmony with the petitioner's desire as this. (11) *We may bring every desire to the altar, and the Lord will grant us what is best.*

41. Gave her his hand. A reassuring token. **Called the saints.** The disciples in the house, her companions in Christian work, and the widows to whom she had ministered. **Presented her alive.** "And so," says Dr. Robinson, "Tabitha became her own survivor. But she did not set up for a saint, and go on exhibition. She simply went to work again and helped more widows."

42. All Joppa. As it was a large city, not a

village, like Lydda, it is said that all heard, and that **many believed**, not that the whole city became believers.

43. Tarried many days. Some think that this means a whole year. **With one Simon.** A very common name among the Jews; 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, but not much faith need be put in such oriental traditions.

CRITICAL NOTES.

The assigned limits of this week's lesson include little material for critical discussion. But the verses between this passage and that of last week present some interesting historical and chronological problems which advanced students of these lessons will not wish to ignore. With verses 23-25 we should compare Paul's own statements in 2 Cor. 2. 32, 33, and Gal. 1. 17, 18.

Verse 24. They watched the gates. From Second Corinthians we learn that not merely the Jews, but "the governor [ethnarch] under Aretas the king guarded" the gates of the city to prevent the escape of Saul. It is not unlikely that the Jews made complaint concerning Saul to the governor, and were even employed to assist in watching the gates. The Jews, as we have already seen, were numerous and influential in the city. Paul's reference to Aretas has led to much conjecture. Under the emperors Augustus and Tiberias the city belonged to the Roman province of Syria. But there is considerable circumstantial evidence for the supposition that during the succeeding reigns of Caligula and Claudius Damascus belonged to the Arabian king Aretas. Between Aretas and Herod Antipas deadly enmity had arisen because Herod had divorced from the former's daughter. In the battle which ensued Herod's army was utterly destroyed. The aid for which he appealed to Tiberias was promptly dispatched, but, by reason of the emperor's death, this army abandoned its campaign against Aretas. The accession of Caligula entirely changed the face of affairs, and before long Herod was sent into banishment. That Caligula reapportioned certain districts in the east is certain, and it is quite probable that he gave Damascus to Aretas, whose predecessor had ruled over this city. The fact that no Damascene coins of Caligula and Claudius exist tends to strengthen this view.

25. Through the wall. The mode of his escape is also described in 2 Cor. 11. 33. Houses

are still seen in the Orient so built that the city wall serves also as a house wall, through which windows are sometimes cut.

26. When he came to Jerusalem. In Gal. 1. 18, we learn that Paul did not visit Jerusalem until three years after his conversion. Luke refers to the time quite indefinitely by the words: "When many days were fulfilled." That the expression "many days" may apply to a period as long as three years is shown by a passage in 1 Kings (2. 38, 39): "And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. And it came to pass at the end of three years," etc.

27. Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles. A comparison of this account with that in Gal. 1. 19, reveals considerable variety in the details related by each writer, but there is such harmony in substance and such undesigned coincidences that the two narratives are mutually confirmatory. Paul adds, as particulars, that he spent fifteen days with Peter and saw no other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. The unreadiness of the disciples in Jerusalem to receive their former persecutor is the more easily understood if we suppose that Paul had spent a considerable portion of the intervening three years in Arabia; and that the political changes above referred to had to a large extent interrupted the usual easy communication between Damascus and Jerusalem. Though the variations between the accounts amount in no instances to contradictions, and strengthen the conviction that the two narrators are writing independently, yet the impression left by Luke's statements needs to be modified by the more definite statements of Paul.

30. Sent him forth to Tarsus. Paul writes concerning the same journey, "I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. 1. 21).

31. So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace. The application here of the term "Church" to the

entire body of believers in the different parts of Palestine indicates a growing sense of that unity which is especially emphasized in the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians, and which extended until it embraced the universal community of believers. The time at which the peace referred to began is uncertain. The decline of the persecution was doubtless gradual. There is much to be said in favor of the view that the attention of the Jewish persecutors was diverted from the disciples by an attempt made by Caligula, shortly before his death, to have his statue set up in the temple. The arrival of Petronius, the Syrian proconsul, with statues and accompanied by three legions of soldiers was well calculated to draw off hostile attention from the infant Church. See Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii, 8, 2-5; *Wars* ii, 10, 1-5.

32. And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts. The chronology and even the order of events in this and the two succeeding chapters have been much disputed. It seems most natural to consider the order of Luke's narration as indicating in general the order of occurrences. During the period of peace (verse 31), in the last years of Caligula (A. D. 37-41), Paul's visit to Jerusalem took place (38 or 39). After his departure for Tarsus, Peter, while making a tour as a general superintendent, came to Lydda. The restoration to life of Dorcas corresponds in many particulars to the raising of Jairus's daughter. The description is one of exquisite beauty and full of suggestiveness, but requires no critical discussion.

The Lesson Council.

Question 2. *Were the miraculous gifts in the early Church frequent or rare? Were they at the will of the workers, or only when a certain power came upon them? May we look for the same phenomena now?*

The miraculous gift was rare as to the number who received it. It was used at will, and also "when certain powers came upon them." Read Acts 2, 43; 3, 1-8; 5, 12-16; 8, 6, 7; 9, 35-41; 14, 8-10; 19, 11, 12; 20, 10-12; 28, 7-10. These phenomena—namely, giving utility to crippled members of the body, as in the case of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, or the cripple that Paul healed (Acts 14, 8-10); giving life to palsied members of the body; or raising the dead—have not been known since the days of the apostles.

There is evidence in the Epistle to the Corinthians and elsewhere that such gifts were quite frequently bestowed, but apparently they could not be exercised except under the special promptings of the Holy Spirit. The divine Bestower kept the power in his own hands and worked through these agents when it seemed to him best. We may look

for the same phenomena now, so far as the circumstances and the need are the same, for God does not change. But the standing miracle of the established Christian Church and the wide extension of the Gospel render such isolated sporadic signs less needful.—*Rev. James Mudge, D.D.*

There are many instances of the exercise of miraculous gifts in the early Church. These began during the Saviour's ministry, with the seventy (Luke 10, 9, 17), and were continued by the twelve (Acts 2, 43; 5, 12). Peter (Acts 3, 7; 5, 5, 10, 15, 16; 9, 34, 40) and Paul (Acts 13, 11; 14, 10; 16, 18; 19, 11, 12; 20, 10, 12) were especially prominent in miracle working. This power appeared in Stephen (Acts 6, 8) and Phillip (Acts 8, 6, 7). Later the "signs and wonders" grew less frequent. No "marvels" need now be looked for by reason of the widespread recognition of the divine origin of Christianity.

They were not frequent as regards the Church at large, but were confined to the disciples of Christ (Acts 2, 43), by whom many miracles were wrought. It was Christ by his Spirit working through the disciples (Acts 3, 6, 12, 16; 4, 20). We are not to look for the same phenomena now for the reason that they are not needed as evidences to authenticate the Gospel preaching. We have better and more convincing evidence in the marvelous transformations of character in conversion (Matt. 9, 5), the martyr spirit now manifested as of old, the rapid spread of Christianity, its history in transforming society, changing civilizations, peoples, and laws. We have a long line of prophecy fulfilled, the power of the "word" alone, the principles which Christ promulgated, tested, and proved. The Church is now doing "greater works."

Miracles were a necessity in the beginning of Christianity, hence their frequency during the first century. Yet the miracle-working power must be so guarded as to prevent the servant's usurpation of his Lord's place. Hence Peter's private interview with his Master to secure assurance of approval and response to his call for the return of life to the dead. The divine commission being acknowledged, men of this world no longer need such credentials from the other world's King for his messengers. Spiritual transformation is a perennial evidence of Christ's resurrection power and of his presence with his Church.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Pictures of Discipleship.

I. UNITED DISCIPLES.

Peter...through all quarters. v. 32.

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

"The church...his body." Eph. 1, 22, 23.

II. HOLY DISCIPLES.

The saints . . . at Lydda. v. 32.

"Be ye holy." 1 Peter 1. 15.

"Perfecting holiness." 2 Cor. 7. 1.

III. WORKING DISCIPLES.

Full of good works. v. 36.

"Fruits of righteousness." Phil. 1. 11.

"Maintain good works." Titus 3. 8.

IV. SORROWING DISCIPLES.

Stood by him weeping. v. 39.

"Sorrow not, even as others." 1 Thess. 4. 13.

"Look not at . . . seen." 2 Cor. 4. 18.

V. PRAYING DISCIPLES.

Kneeled down and prayed. v. 40.

"Ask what ye will." John 15. 7.

"Believing, ye shall receive." Matt. 21. 22.

VI. REJOICING DISCIPLES.

Presented her alive. v. 41.

"Sorrow . . . turned into joy." John 16. 20.

"God shall wipe away all tears." Rev. 21. 4.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Inspirations of the Gospel.

1. The Gospel inspires the spirit of unity, binding into one brotherhood all who believe in Christ. (Verse 32.)
2. The Gospel inspires holiness, shown in the name "saints" applied to believers. (Verse 32.)
3. The Gospel inspires strength and health to the body as an emblem of health to the soul. (Verse 34.)
4. The Gospel inspires thought and love for others, especially of the needy. (Verse 36.)
5. The Gospel inspires deeds of helpfulness and charity. (Verse 36.)
6. The Gospel inspires such a character and life as leaves behind it a fragrant memory. (Verse 39.)
7. The Gospel inspires a faith and power which are mightier than death. (Verse 40.)
8. The Gospel inspires a brotherhood which counts all men alike before God. (Verse 43.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Poor Eneas!

Year after year he has kept his tiresome, helpless bed. He cannot rise, he cannot make even his own couch comfortable. Other hands must lift and give every kind of comfort and rest.

But one day he hears a footstep entering his room. He looks up. He sees the serious yet kindly and encouraging face of Peter. And what is Peter's assurance, and what is Peter's bidding? Jesus Christ makes whole, and Eneas is to rise and make his own bed! Eneas is to get out, stir and turn and spread and smooth his couch! "It cannot be," mutters a servant.

But look! Eneas stirs, he turns even, he rises,

that helpless invalid of a previous moment, and now makes his bed!

What excitement all through Lydda! What wonder that a whole townful of people may be seen turning to the Lord!

But another sight is witnessed, and this time at Joppa—Joppa down by the great, blue sea; Joppa busy, thoughtless, and forgetful of God. But not all are forgetful. There is Dorcas. Patient, loving heart, she remembers God and forgets not his poor, distressed creatures. But O, dark the day, throwing a shadow into many poor homes, when Dorcas dies. It comes at last, so suddenly, this messenger, Death, whose approach, even when anticipated, seems abrupt to fondly clinging hearts. Take the still body into that upper chamber quiet and restful. Let no sunbeam come in to stare at this seclusion of the dead. Close the lattice. Fold the hands of the dead and leave her in that sacred retirement.

Now what shall be done?

Who can break this power of death? Ah, weary hearts, forget not the risen Jesus. Is not his disciple Peter in Lydda? Tell Peter, disciple of Jesus, that Dorcas is dead.

Two men are in the dusty, weary road, hurrying away to Lydda. They disappear, then they come again, and a third one is with them, Peter. Ah, one other is there, and the unseen Saviour, conqueror of death, source of life, comes to Joppa. The little party reaches the house of sorrow. Peter climbs the stairway and enters the quiet room of the sleeper. And what a sight! All those weeping widows pointing at the signs of Dorcas's love, "showing the coats and garments" her unwearied, loving fingers had made.

But Peter must be alone with the dead. The mourners pass away, and stillness is in that shaded room. Is Peter alone when he kneels? One mightier is there, one all-powerful to answer his prayer, one bending in pity above the dead, one speaking through Peter's voice and crying, "Tabitha, arise!"

And Dorcas, pale, still sleeper, she opens her eyes! She hears her Master calling her back through the valley of shadows. She rises, and when Peter lifts her up, and calls in the weeping "saints and widows," what an hour of joy, what tears of congratulation, what thanks to God! And over all that group, lo, there is the bending form of the risen Jesus, bestowing his benediction.

By Way of Illustration.

Verse 33. The disciples of Christ go from Pentecost to service. They "find" certain sick, poor, suffering ones. A legend tells of a monk who in his cell had a beautiful vision of Christ. While he gazed at the sight with great joy he heard the convent bell, and knew that it was the

hour when the poor came to the gate to be fed. He left the vision for the humble service, and when he returned the Saviour was still there, saying: "Hast thou stayed, I would have gone. As thou hast gone, I have remained."

Golden Text. The best example of self-denying liberality in the Bible is recorded of woman. The best example of loving service, the best example of conquering prayer, is recorded of woman. Jesus never let fall such words of royal commendation as concerning these three women. Of the poor widow he said: "She has cast in more than they all." Of Mary with her alabaster box of ointment he said: "She hath done what she could." And to the praying Canaanitish mother he said: "O, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

A needle, only a needle, in the hand of a consecrated woman earned two hundred and fifty dollars, which built a church on the Western frontier, where many souls were saved. A needle in the hand of a consecrated woman earned money enough to educate a poor boy. He is now a successful preacher of the Gospel. A needle in the hand of a Christian missionary opened the door of the zenanas of India, closed for centuries, so that now women missionaries can enter those secluded Hindoo apartments, and while they teach the women to sew and embroider they talk of Jesus, and bring Gospel light into heathen darkness. The result has been the saving of a multitude of souls.

Verse 39. It was once remarked to Lord Erskine that a certain man dying had left a million dollars, whereupon he replied: "That's a poor capital to begin the next world with. If he had only 'converted' it, as the bankers say! And it was convertible into the blessings of the poor; into the sweet consciousness of having done some good while he lived; into the good hope of perpetuating his influence when he was dead and gone."—*The Christian.*

Verse 40. Just as a shoemaker makes a shoe, and a tailor a coat, so the Christian's trade is praying. In my day it has raised three persons from the point of death—myself, my wife Catherine, and Melancthon.—*Luther.*

The Teachers' Meeting.

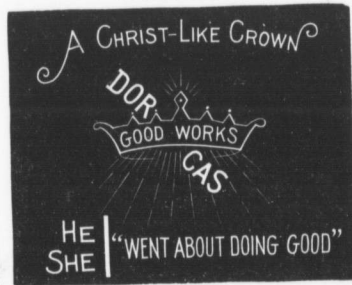
Draw the map of Palestine, showing the Plain of Sharon, locating Jerusalem, Lydda, and Joppa, and showing the direction of Peter's journey.... Note in this lesson the characteristics of disciples in the early Church.... The inspiring power of the Gospel. See "Thoughts for Young People.".... Peter's example: (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 (verse 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?... Use as illustrations of 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 lifetime, 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?

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 36: Complimentary names, 828. Ver. 37: The "upper chamber," 838. Ver. 39: The tunic, 821.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Poetical, 3339, 3340; Prose, 310, 4280, 8193, 8186, 8201. Vers. 36-39: Prose, 3593, 1609-1614, 2956, 314, 2062, 2991, 8132, 11559.

Blackboard.



The blackboard presents a diagram illustrating the life of Dorcas. She lived to do good. This was her crowning glory, to wear a Christlike crown of good works. Speak of the good one can do in this world. Let some one find and read where it says of Jesus, "He went about doing good." Dorcas also went about doing good in his name, and "in his name" she was restored to life.

DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS.—Crown, bright yellow; words on the crown, white; name of Dorcas, purple or violet; rays, white or orange; top sentence, white or light blue; lower sentence, scarlet or red.

BLACKBOARD SENTENCE.

I CAN DO
OF MYSELF—NOTHING.
IN HIS NAME—EVERYTHING.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Life out of Death.*

[Draw the map of Palestine—locating Jerusalem, Lydda, and Joppa—on which to trace Peter's journey. Print "Peter" in large letters on the board.]

Who was Peter? What kind of a man was he? Who can tell anything to show that he was brave? Who can show that he was cowardly? [If necessary, help the children to recall the walking on the water, and the cutting off the ear of the soldier; also the denial of his Master.]

Read from the Bible John 21. 15-17, and show that Jesus gave Peter work to do for him—feeding his sheep and lambs. Did he mean real sheep and lambs? No; he meant that he wanted Peter to teach men and women and children the way to heaven.

Who called himself the Good Shepherd? Yes; Jesus. Now he made Peter a kind of shepherd, too, whose business it was to give help and care to those who needed them.

[Make a shepherd's crook on the board, and trace Peter's journey on the map to Lydda, about a day's journey from Jerusalem.] There were a few believers in Jesus living there, and Peter went to visit them, and see what he could do to help them.

He found work right away. A man lay there sick with palsy. For eight years he had been there sick and helpless. Eight years! Here is Willie, eight years old. As many years as Willie has lived in this world the poor man had been suffering.

Now Peter has come to see him. But Peter is not a doctor. How can he help him? Did Peter ever cure anyone?

[Let some child tell the story of the cure of the lame man at the temple gate, and tell that Jesus had given the disciples power to do wonders in his name.] Peter said to Eneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." It was not Peter's work, but it would not have been done if Peter had not had faith in Jesus's power.

But Peter did not cure all the sick people he saw. This is the way the Lord took to show the people of Lydda his great power.

Follow Peter in his journey to Joppa. Ah! here is greater trouble among the disciples than at Lydda. A dear woman, the good Dorcas, everybody's friend, is dead. Surely Peter cannot help her! No; but Jesus Christ can, for he is the Life.

[Show a dead twig of a tree and a live one by its side.] Each has its body, but the life is gone out of one and it is good for nothing. If the live one is planted in the earth it may take root and grow, because it has the life in it.



There is one in whom is all the Life—what is his name? Yes, the great God. The life of these bodies comes from him; the life of the trees and plants and everything that lives. [Tell story of the child who would not kill a fly because it had some of God's life in it. Was this right?]

Do you think the God who gives life can take it back again? O, yes! he had taken back the beautiful life of Dorcas, and she had gone to live in heaven. And now, in answer to Peter's prayer, he is going to let the life come back to her body for a while longer.

[Tell the story, and teach that these wonderful things were done to make people know that Jesus was truly God.]

My Lesson. The God who can put life into a dead body can surely put good, sweet life into a naughty heart. If any child wants a new heart, let him go to Jesus for it now.

OPTIMAL EXERCISES.

No. 1.

Awake, and sing.
How good thou art to me.
All hail the power.
O, scatter seeds of loving deeds.
Give me some work to do.

No. 2.

If you feel a love for sinners.
The Saviour calls in accents clear.
O how happy are they.
Who can unfold the bliss untold.
One more day is dying.

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? **GOLDEN TEXT: "This woman," etc.**
6. How was she restored to life? **By the prayer of Peter.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

39. Where is the Spirit said to bear this witness? **The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God. Rom. viii. 16.**
And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.—Galatians iv. 6.

A. D. 39.]

LESSON III. PETER'S VISION.

[Oct. 16.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.

Acts 10. 34.

Authorized Version.

Acts 10. 1-50. [Commit to memory verses 1-4.]

1 There was a certain man in Ces'a-re'a called Cor-ne-li-us, a centurion of the band called the It-al'ian band,

2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

3 He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cor-ne-li-us.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Jop'pa, and call for one Si'mon, whose surname is Pe'ter:

6 He lodgeth with one Si'mon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cor-ne-li-us was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Jop'pa.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Pe'ter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready he fell into a trance.

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

14 But Pe'ter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Pe'ter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cor-ne-li-us had made inquiry for Si'mon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Si'mon, which was surnamed Pe'ter, were lodged there.

19 While Pe'ter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent thee.

Revised Version.

1 Now there was a certain man in Ces'a-re'a, Cor-ne-li-us by name, a centurion of the band 2 called the It-al'ian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God 3 always. He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, 4 Cor-ne-li-us. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before 5 God. And now send men to Jop'pa, and fetch 6 one Si'mon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Si'mon a tanner, whose house is by 7 the seaside. And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of 8 them that waited on him continually; and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Jop'pa.

9 Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Pe'ter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the 10 sixth hour: and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell 11 into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners 12 upon the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things of the 13 earth and fowls of the heaven. And there came 14 a voice to him, Rise, Pe'ter; kill and eat. But Pe'ter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. 15 And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou 16 common. And this was done thrice; and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.

17 Now while Pe'ter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cor-ne-li-us, having made inquiry for Si'mon's 18 house, stood before the gate, and called and asked whether Si'mon, which was surnamed 19 Pe'ter, were lodging there. And while Pe'ter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, 20 Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them.

TIME.—A. D. 40. **PLACES.**—Cesarea; Joppa. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The communion of God with man.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Peter's vision. Acts 10. 1-20.
Tu. What is defilement? Matt. 15. 10-20.
W. Inward cleanness. Luke 11. 33-44.
Th. Life for the Gentiles. Acts 11. 1-18.
F. By faith. Gal. 3. 7-14.
S. The woman of Samaria. John 4. 1-10.
S. Made nigh. Eph. 2. 11-22.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 355, New Canadian Hymnal.
 First among the Christian graces.
 No. 352, New Canadian Hymnal.
 There's a wideness in God's mercy.
 No. 350, New Canadian Hymnal.
 God be with you till we meet again.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 289, 276, 261.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Cornelius's Vision, v. 1-8.

Explain five things said of Cornelius. (Verses 1, 2.)

Name each item of his vision from verses 3-6.
 Name some other cases where an angel came to a man.

About what was Peter to tell Cornelius? (Verse 6.)

What does this mean?
 What does the devoutness of Cornelius's servants indicate?

How did Cornelius act? (Verses 7, 8.)

2. Peter's Vision, v. 9-16.

What facts about Peter are in verses 9 and 10?

What did he see? (Verses 11, 12.)

In what physical condition was he?

What was said to him and by him? (Verses 13-15.)

Why was this done three times? (Verse 16.)

What would you suppose this to mean?

3. Visions Solved, v. 17-20.

How were the questions of the men from Cornelius settled? (Verse 17.)

How were Peter's doubts settled? (Verses 19, 20.)

How do you suppose Peter and Cornelius felt when their visions were thus solved?

What does this part of the story teach us concerning God's providential guidance?

What does it teach concerning individual responsibility for missionary work?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson—

1. Do we see God's willingness to help men?
2. Do we find illustration of our Golden Text?
3. Do we see that grace is often found where least expected?
4. Are we taught that we should persevere in prayer till the answer comes?
5. Are we given a beautiful example of piety at home?
6. Do we see that where spiritual interests are at stake no time should be lost?
7. Do we see that it is not easy to break away from habit?
8. Are we shown that God will remove difficulties from before the obedient?

Hints for Home Study.

Find the first mention of Joppa in the Bible.
 What prophet started on a perilous journey from Joppa?

What miracle had been performed at Joppa?

Had Jesus ever taught in Joppa?

What connection had Joppa had with Solomon's temple?

Pick out the "orientalisms," the peculiar Eastern customs indicated by this lesson, concerning tanners, prayer on the housetop, using sheets of cloth as wrapping paper, ritual restrictions in eating, the use of surnames, etc.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Cornelius's Vision, v. 1-8.

Who was Cornelius?

What is said as to his character?

Where did he have a vision?

Whom did he see? When?

How did the vision affect him?

What was said about his good deeds?

What is Paul's injunction about good works? (Titus 3, 8.)

For whom was Cornelius bidden to send?

Where would Peter be found?

What would Peter tell him?

Who were sent to Joppa?

2. Peter's Vision, v. 9-16.

When did Peter have a vision?

Where was he at the time?

What is said of his feelings?

What did Peter see?

What did he hear?

What was his reply?

What then was said to him?

How many times did this occur?

To whom are all things pure? (Titus 1. 15.)

3. Visions Solved, v. 17-20.

What visitors came to Simon's house?

What did they ask?

How was Peter engaged at this time?
 Who then spoke to him?
 What was he told to do?
 What lesson were the visitors to teach Peter?
 (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are you taught—

1. That God always hears true prayer?
2. That God always guides sincere seekers?
3. That good deeds are acceptable to God?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

What prophet started on a voyage from Joppa?
 What Roman officer came into contact with Jesus?
 Who else saw heaven opened in a vision, and under what circumstances?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Cornelius? **A Roman centurion.**
 What kind of a man was he? **One who feared God.**
 Who came to visit him? **An angel.**
 What did he tell him? **That God had heard his prayers.**
 What did God now mean to do? **To teach him the way more perfectly.**

What did the angel tell Cornelius to do? **To send for Peter.**

What did Cornelius do? **He sent two of his servants to Peter.**

Where was Peter now? **In Joppa.**
 Where did Peter go to pray? **On the housetop.**

What did he have while there? **A vision.**
 What did he see coming down from heaven? **A vessel, like a great sheet.**

What was in it? **All kinds of beasts and fowls.**

What was said to him? **"Kill and eat."**
 What did Peter say? **That he could not eat common things.**

What did the voice say? **"What God has cleansed, call not common."**

While Peter was thinking of the vision who called for him? **The servants of Cornelius.**

What did the Spirit tell him to do? **To go with them.**

Words with Little People.

Just as God noticed Peter and Cornelius, and thought how he could teach them their lessons, so he notices you, and plans your lessons.
 For "this God is our Guide."

Whisper Prayer.

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

Peter was the foremost man among the Christians of Jerusalem. However others may have been officially ranked, the splendid qualities of this apostle made him in many ways a leader. Now, when the time was ripe for the Gospel to be taken to the Gentiles, the Spirit of God turned to Peter to be the leader in this "new departure." But, like all his apostolic associates, he was still a narrow-minded Hebrew. Not even three years' intimate association with our Lord had sufficed to get rid of his bigotry. But he was conscientious, and God is never impatient with sincere souls; so he appealed to Peter's conscience in a way which must make a deep impression. Peter, like all Jews, thought "in types." So God came to him, when he was hungry, with a vision of articles of food which were forbidden as typically unclean. All the circumstances served to enhance the conviction that this vision was sent from God, and that it foretold the delivery of the Gospel message to the Gentiles; so with alacrity Peter obeyed the celestial command, and hastened down stairs to meet the messengers of the Roman centurion.

Verse 1. Cesarea. The Roman capital of Palestine, on the Mediterranean coast; the official residence of Pilate, Felix, and Festus; a splendid city of palaces, temples, and theaters, built by Herod the Great, and named in honor of the Roman emperor. More than one city in America has sprung into similar splendor and populousness in a half century, but such cities have been favored by currents of immigration and mercantile success. This city originated in one man's whim. To have a city thus built to order was a favorite amusement of ancient nabobs. **Cornelius.** Julian the Apostate refers to him as one of the few men of distinction who became Christians. **A centurion.** The captain of a hundred soldiers. The **Italian**

band was, in modern phraseology, a regiment enlisted in Italy, probably for service as the Roman governor's bodyguard. A trusty light guard was a prime necessity in the land of turbulent Jews.

2. Devout. Conscientiously careful of religious duties. Starting as a sincere pagan, he had learned from the Jews that Jehovah was the true God, and had become his sincere worshiper. **All his house.** Or, as we would say, his household. Whether or not he was "a man of family" it is idle to conjecture; as captain of the Governor's Guards he would have an imposing domestic establishment—military attendants and slaves—and all these he led into the fear of God. All Christians in authority—parents and employers—may

learn a lesson from this godly heathen. **Alms.** Unsatisfactory as modern social conditions are, they are paradise compared with those of the Roman Empire, where through wide regions more than half of the people were slaves, and more than half of the freemen were paupers. There were none of the benevolent institutions which dot Christendom, and almost the only way to show kindness to the wretched was by direct "alms." Almsgiving was naturally looked upon by the Hebrews as one of the heavenliest of virtues. **Prayed . . . always.** He was a man of prayer, serving God conscientiously according to his best light, but without comfort of soul. (1) *Grace is often found where least expected.* (2) *He whose Christian character is not felt in his home has none.* (3) *We should persevere in prayer till the answer comes.*

3. In a vision. Unmistakably, while Cornelius was wide awake this **angel of God** came. **Ninth hour.** Three o'clock in the afternoon, one of the Jewish hours of prayer. Cornelius had fasted all day (verse 30).

4. Afraid. So would you be if in the midst of your prayer an angel appeared. **A memorial before God.** A constant remembrancer. If God could forget any of his creatures, the one forgotten would surely not be a prayerful and sympathetic soul.

5, 6. Joppa. Thirty miles away, where Peter still was. **Surname.** Family names were Roman in origin; oriental families had none. So Jews of the same name were distinguished by what we might now call "nicknames," appellations based on some personal peculiarity. Of all Simons this one was known as Peter—the Rock. **Simon a tanner.** In our last lesson it was noted that Peter's lodging place may be indicative of a gradual broadening of his views, for tanners were held by the Jews to be unclean. **He shall tell thee.** Why the angel could not tell we cannot say, except that God's plan always is, having revealed the truth, to employ men in publishing it.

7, 8. Household servants. Slaves, doubtless, according to the custom of the time, but prayerful like their master. See verse 1. **A devout soldier.** That there were any such in the midst of almost universal corruption seems strange. **Declared.** Rehearsed. He told the whole story, and simply desired that it should be repeated to Peter. (4) *Promptitude is as needful in religious as in secular affairs.*

9, 10. Peter went up upon the housetop to pray. This would be a strange proceeding amid our environments; but in the East housetops are flat, and no one thinks of hiding in private prayer. The hour for prayer had come, and doubtless on dozens of housetops around pious

people were prostrating themselves. **Sixth hour.** About noon. **Became very hungry.** Peter's hunger was as really God's messenger as Cornelius's angel. **A trance.** A state of ecstasy.

11, 12, 13. Vessel. Or, "container." **Knit at the four corners.** Caught up at the corners, and tied perhaps by a rope. It was let down to the earth. From the roof Peter could easily look into it. **All manner.** A large share of flesh food esteemed by other nations was repugnant to Jews because of the law of Lev. 11. Such an indiscriminate group as this must have been very offensive to Peter. The law was intended, typically, to teach the difference between the morally pure and impure, and, by preventing the Hebrews and heathen from coming together, to keep the former a separate people. **Kill.** A large share of hungry men nowadays would be embarrassed if a live animal were handed to them and they were expected to kill, dress, cook, and serve it to themselves. The customs of the Jews were very simple, however, and doubtless Peter was well able to cook his own food. **Eat.** Make no longer any distinction between (ceremonially) "clean" and "unclean" food.

14. Not so. Peter is a positive Jew. **Common.** Not set apart, and so made lawful. **Unclean.** Ceremonially.

15. Cleansed. Made clean, and so lawful. **Call not thou common.** Better, "Make not thou common," and so unlawful. An implication that the voice was God's.

16. Thrice. Three is a sacred number, typical of God to the ancient mind.

17, 18. He made inquiry . . . and stood. Concerning this story, with its succession of coincidences, there will be little skepticism among the thousands of teachers and scholars who study it, *because it is a miracle.* But how many believe that such providential interweaving of human events is constant and normal, and that men are being led by God when he is farthest from their thoughts? Believed or doubted, this is *true.* God is as intent on the salvation and providential development of my soul and yours as he was intent on the spiritual welfare of Peter or Cornelius or the "devout soldier" and "household servants."

19. Thought, Meditated. The Spirit, God. There was probably no audible voice. That Peter was impelled to go down to meet three men before he had seen them or the porter had called him was another indication that he was in God's hands.

20. Doubting nothing. "Hesitate not when you discover that they are Gentiles." **I have sent them.** When Peter heard their wonderful story he understood the great lesson that God would teach him, that it was *men* whom he must not more hold common or unclean.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Cornelius . . . a centurion of the band called the Italian band. The Roman centurions referred to in the New Testament are men of exceptionally good character. One, who awakened the astonishment of Jesus by his marvelous faith (Matt. 8. 5), had already proved his love for the Jews by building them a synagogue (Luke 7. 5); another at the crucifixion expressed his conviction that Jesus was a righteous man (Luke 23. 47) and the Son of God (Mark 14. 39); and another treated Paul with courtesy at the outset of his voyage to Rome (Acts 27. 3), and saved him at the time of the shipwreck from cruel death at the hands of the soldiers (Acts 27. 42, 43). The centurion of the present lesson bears one of the most distinguished of Roman names. The Cornelian house, including, among other notable persons, Dolabella, Lentulus, Scipio, Sulla, and the "mother of the Gracchi," was as conspicuous for the exalted virtues of some of its members as it was for the infamous vices and crimes of others. The centurion Cornelius may have owed his name to some slight and unimportant connection with this great house, but his position as an officer in the Italian band or cohort renders it practically certain that he was himself a native Italian. It was fitting that this body of Italian troops should be stationed at Caesarea, the headquarters of the Roman governor. Of several ancient inscriptions which refer to Italian cohorts one speaks of an "Italian cohort of volunteers which is in Syria." See *Schürer* i, 2. 53, American edition.

2. A devout man, and one that feared

God. These words describe one of that large and important class among the Gentiles of that age who, having lost faith in their inherited heathen religions, had, in various degrees, adopted Jewish beliefs and modes of worship without actually becoming Jewish proselytes. Cornelius is not even to be regarded as a "proselyte of the gate," since this term and the distinction it involves appear to belong not to ancient, but to mediæval times. See *Schürer* ii, 2. 31. He was a "God-fearing" man (verses 2 and 22; comp. 13. 16, 26), who observed the stated hours of prayer and gave liberally to the Jewish people. It was doubtless through his influence that his household also was devout. Nevertheless, Peter needed a special supernatural vision to prepare him to preach the Gospel to him, an uncircumcised Gentile; and when the apostle returned to Jerusalem "they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them" (11. 2. 3; comp. 11. 17, 18). It is not certain that the Gospel had not been previously preached by obscure believers (1. 20) or by Paul to uncircumcised

Gentiles. But at all events this conversion of the devout Roman officer by the preaching of Peter was the first official and conspicuous recognition of the right which the Gentiles had to participate in all the Gospel blessings without becoming Jewish proselytes. As such Peter refers to it at the Council of Jerusalem (15. 7-11). As such it was made a test case in Jerusalem (11. 1-18). Particularly interesting in connection with this transaction are the references of Paul to Peter's wavering course at Antioch (Gal. 2. 11-16), and to the revelation "unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" of "the mystery of Christ," that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (Eph. 2. 3-6).

9. Peter went up upon the housetop to pray. The flat roofs of oriental houses play an interesting part in Bible history. See, for example, 1 Sam. 9. 25, 26; 2 Sam. 11. 2; 2 Kings 23. 12; Prov. 21. 9; Jer. 32. 29. The particular house by the seaside in Jaffa which is visited by tourists as the scene of Peter's vision has no reliable proof for its claim to be on the authentic site. But the general position and conditions are doubtless very nearly duplicated in this traditional housetop. The same blue sea is spread out before the visitor, and the same blue sky bends over him. Everything suggests retirement, elevation, breadth of view, and uninterrupted intercourse with heaven.

10. A trance. The Greek word is *ekstasis*, from which we derive our English *ecstasy*. It signifies, from its derivation, a "standing out of oneself." Sometimes the state described by it is one of amazement and awe (8. 10; Mark 16. 8). Here and in 22. 17, it describes a rapt condition in which one, though awake, is quite oblivious to ordinary external objects, while he sees supernatural visions or superhuman persons. **A great sheet, let down by four corners.** The vessel, or receptacle, looked like a great sheet let down by four corners, held, we may suppose, by invisible, angelic hands. It seems fanciful to regard these four corners as typical of the four quarters of the globe.

13. Kill and eat. The situation presents a remarkable union of the natural and supernatural, the literal and typical. Such a vision was well adapted to make an impression upon the hungry apostle, to whom the sea breezes may have given a fisherman's appetite. He rightly understands the invitation to mean that he is to kill and eat any of the animals, clean or unclean. With other strict Jews he has hitherto refused to eat with Gentiles lest he should partake at their table of some of the levitically unclean animals (Lev. 11. 1-19). Now all this prejudice, which was apparently well founded on Scripture precept, is suddenly rebuked

and swept away. Peter had heard the underlying principle of this broader and better view announced by his Master (Mark 7. 18, 19), who declared that "whatsoever from without goeth into a man, cannot defile him," and who, in so saying, made all meats clean. (See Revised Version as above.) But it takes oft-repeated lessons to eradicate deep-rooted prejudice. The Lord now again "made all meats clean" by offering them to Peter. It was absurd for Peter to claim to be more scrupulous than the Lord. But if Peter needed a triple repetition of this divine injunction about unclean animals, he was quick to perceive, when the messengers of Cornelius arrived, the application of the vision to the leuitically unclean Gentiles.

20. Nothing doubting. In 11. 12, where the active voice of this verb is used, instead of the middle, which occurs here, the revisers have rendered "making no distinction." See also in 15. 9. Internal doubts would lead him to make the external distinction.

The Lesson Council.

Question 3. *What was Peter's authority in the early Church? In what sense was he the "chief of the apostles?"*

Peter had equal authority with the other apostles, no more. He had no office among them, nor did he exercise any more power. In the council at Jerusalem James (Acts 15. 13-19) and Peter (Acts 15. 7-10) had coordinate authority; and previous to this Peter and John were both subordinate to the entire body of the apostles (Acts 8. 14). Paul did not consider Peter's decisions final (Gal. 2. 11). Peter's prominence was due to his impulsiveness and self-confidence. This brought upon him the Saviour's rebuke (Matt. 16. 21-23); but under the Spirit's baptism it made him the preacher at Pentecost, the one who first opened the door of the Church to the Gentiles (Acts 10. 48), the natural leader among the apostles:

In the few years immediately following Christ's departure Peter was manifestly the earthly visible head of the followers of the new faith. But subsequently, as is seen in the fifteenth chapter, James became the head of the mother Church at Jerusalem, and Paul had supremacy among the Gentile churches; so that Peter's influence was a good deal circumscribed. But, of course, he remained one of "the pillars" till his death.

He had no authority above any other of the apostles. He was, according to Matt. 10. 2, the senior apostle, and after our Lord's ascension was recognized as the president of the apostolic college. He was "chief" speaker on the day of Pen-

tecost, and was the recognized leader of "the sect of the Nazarenes." In these respects he was "the chief of the apostles." St. Cyprian said: "The rest of the apostles were that which Peter was, endowed with equal participation, both of honor and power.

Peter was chief in the sense of being the chief spokesman of the apostles (Acts 1. 15-25; Matt. 16. 16), the most impetuous in action, and in being first chosen by the Holy Spirit for important offices in the Church, to which he was specially adapted, as preaching at Pentecost and to the Gentiles (Acts 10). But he was not first in authority among the apostles, for in the first council at Jerusalem (Acts 15. 13-20) James appears as head of the apostolic college, and delivers the decision, and tradition confirms his authority. Nor was Peter first in authority among the Gentiles at large, for Paul undoubtedly held the preeminence as being the chief apostle to the Gentile world, and Paul claimed for himself equal authority with any of the apostles (2 Cor. 11. 5).

Peter was an impulsive man, a natural leader, early called chief spokesman for the body (Matt. 19. 27). He suggested the choice of a successor to Judas (Acts 1. 15); preached in the pentecostal expository service of the Jerusalem revival (Acts 2. 14); wrought the first recorded miracle of healing in Jesus's name (Acts 3. 5); the first miracle of judgment (Acts 5. 3); opened the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 15. 7). Yet he never assumes lordship. He suggests, reasons, remonstrates, instructs. If he was chief it was by fullness of spiritual life and superior natural gifts and consecration making him easily first among equals.

Analytical and Biblical Outline. A Sincere Seeker.

I. A GENTILE.

A certain . . . centurion. v. 1.

"Ye being . . . Gentiles." Eph. 2. 11-13.

"Other sheep I have." John 10. 16.

II. A RIGHTEOUS MAN.

One that feared God. v. 2.

"Feareth the Lord . . . teach." Psa. 25. 12.

"Do his will . . . know." John 7. 17.

III. A GENEROUS GIVER.

Gave much alms. v. 2.

"Considereth the poor." Psa. 41. 1.

"God is not unrighteous." Heb. 6. 10.

IV. A MAN OF PRAYER.

Prayed to God always. v. 2.

"Ask . . . shall be given." Matt. 7. 7. 8.

"Seek me early." Prov. 8. 17.

V. PROMPT IN OBEEDIENCE.

Send men . . . he sent them. v. 5-8.

"What wilt . . . me to do?" Acts 9. 6.

"What shall we do?" Acts 2. 37.

VI. ACCEPTED OF GOD.

What God hath cleansed. 15.

"He will draw nigh." Jas. 4. 8.

"Whosoever shall call." Rom. 10. 12, 13.

Thoughts for Young People.

Incidental Lessons.

1. *Love of truth is the basis of all goodness.* He who does not search and pray for the truth, whether converted or unconverted, will soon go astray. Reverential desire to receive the truth from any source will always be blessed by God.

2. *"He who prays in secret will usually pray in his family,"* and he will be respected in the community as a praying man.

3. *Mere morality does not fear God,* nor pray, nor believe in Jesus, nor concern itself about him.

4. *No faith is true which does not find something to do.*

5. *In every human being God sees one for whom his Son shed his blood.*

Lesson Word-Pictures.

An angel is hovering over Caesarea by the blue sea. In one of the city's homes he will fold his bright pinions. Whose house will it be? An angel, one of God's messengers? Then he will be likely to visit one of God's chosen people, a Jew. Peter would have probably said this, Peter in another town by the sea farther down the coast. Where does this celestial messenger go, however, but into the home of a centurion, a Roman, one of an unclean, despised, inferior people! In this case the centurion is praying. How still is that secluded spot of prayer!

Suddenly a clear voice breaks the hush—"Cornelius!" The man at his prayer, surprised, startled, looks up, and lo, an angel! Cornelius is afraid. Is it a messenger of wrath? O, no! Cornelius hears only a gracious assurance of God's remembrance of his asking and his giving. How little, though, he could appreciate the significance of that visit! There was a high wall everywhere running between the Jewish and the Gentile world, and on the Jew side was the Gospel of Jesus. Who would make a break in the wall? Who would come to preach Jesus to the Gentiles? That angel had come to break down the wall, and the centurion's hands were to help pull away the stones. How little the centurion understands this! All he is to do, then, is to send to Joppa for Peter.

Off go two of his servants and a trusty soldier, and they take the old road traveled for generations, and leading to Joppa. At last the walls of the ancient port are before them, and they enter the city to hunt up Peter.

Where is the apostle? He will be found in some

house by the wide-rolling sea, and they begin the search. We, too, are looking round. Do you see that man walking on the flat roof of a Joppa house? You say that is Peter. He has gone up there to pray. He has taken with him to the seclusion of this hour of prayer his Jewish prejudices, but also his deep, Christlike yearnings for souls. He may have been thinking upon the great subject, How to get the Gospel of Jesus to those without the high wall between Jew and Gentile, how make a hole in the wall, how tear it down and keep it down! But what is it that he sees? He is faint through hunger, he has gone off into a trance; and what does he see hanging over the blue sea? A great white cloud coming down slowly! It is nearing him. Is it the white-fog rolling in from the sea and about to swathe the house of Simon the tanner? He looks again, and it is not that, but "a great sheet knit at the four corners!" Something held up, and something that holds a secret! What is it? He reaches up and looks over into this great white sheet! O, the strange, manifold creatures therein—devouring beasts, things that creep and glide and fly and crawl and twist—he looks no longer! If this sheet had only held animals that would have given him, a hungry man, a savory meal! He turns away. In the midst of this aversion comes a solemn command to kill and eat. Not he, a Jew hating the "common or unclean." A rebuke now is heard, even thrice. Peter must not pronounce unclean anything of God's cleansing. Suddenly Peter's eyes open. He is back in this world on a Joppa house roof, staring vacantly across the sea. Where did that white sheet go? That vanishing sail on the water, is that the white sheet? In the midst of all this he hears voices down at the gate. They are asking for one Simon, "surnamed Peter." And lo, in Peter's soul a voice is echoing, bidding him go with these men seeking him. As he goes does he hear the sound of any wall tumbling about him, that hard old wall separating Jew and Gentile?

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The *Indian Methodist Times* gives the following, which illustrates the ostentation of oriental almsgiving:

"GOLD-WEIGHING CEREMONY.—On the 29th of April the thulabharam ceremony was performed in great state by the Maharajah of Travancore in the Great Pagoda. At 7 A. M. the Maharajah came to the temple. After presenting an elephant and offerings to the shrine, his highness entered the mandapam prepared for the occasion and, after going through the preliminary ceremonies, mounted on the scales, while the sword and shield were placed on his lap. In the other scale gold coins, struck for the occasion, were poured until

the scale touched the ground, the priests meanwhile chanting Vedic hymns and mantras. The Dewan and the palace and other officials began distributing the gold coins from the principal fort gates to above fifteen thousand Brahmins, all of whom were sumptuously fed for eight days.

By Way of Illustration.

"A centurion... a devout man." We talk about the sacred ministry and the sacred desk; but we want sacred offices, sacred banks, sacred stores, and sacred shops, and every man in them who bears Christ's name to be an ordained minister of God. Every calling is sacred, and every line of business for the Christian is one in which the Master may be served, and testimony for the truth may be borne.—*Dr. Pentecost.*

"What I spent I had;
What I saved I lost;
What I gave I have."

—*Epitaph on an old tombstone.*

Verses 9. Sometimes a fog will settle over a vessel's deck, and yet leave the topmast clear. Then a sailor goes aloft, and gets a lookout, which the helmsman on deck cannot get. So prayer lifts us above the clouds and gives us a chance to see which way to steer.—*Spurgeon.*

Golden Text. Shelley and Leigh Hunt, talking together once in their literary way, made this memorable concession to Christianity: "What might not this religion do if it relied on character, not on creed!"—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

The union of Christians to Christ, their common head, and the influence therefrom which unites Christians to each other, may be illustrated by the loadstone; it not only attracts the particles of iron to itself by the magnetic virtue, but by this virtue it unites them one among another.—*Cecil.*

As Peter grew in grace and in the knowledge of the truth his brotherly love increased. As the lines from a circle approach their center they approach each other; so the nearer men get to Christ the nearer they get to each other. Their love for each other is in proportion to their love for Christ.

The Teachers' Meeting.

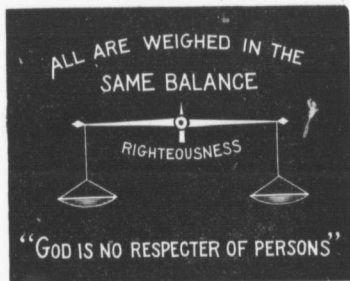
One of the directest methods for handling this lesson is that suggested by the *Illustrative Notes*: I. The sincere seeker after God (1) is found amid unpromising conditions; (2) lives righteously and reverently; (3) exerts a godly influence; (4) perseveres in prayer; (5) is obedient to God's Spirit. II. God rewards the sincere seeker. (1) He hears his prayer; (2) answers it

directly and specifically; (3) sends him a teacher; (4) gives him the word of truth—the fullness of the Gospel and spiritual guidance.... Or we can take up, I. The places—Two maritime cities, (1) Joppa, with its historic associations; (2) Cesarea, with its political importance and splendor. II. The men, (1) the Roman soldier; (2) the Jewish fisherman. III. The circumstances. Both men were prayerful, but how falsely one had been brought up, and how narrowly the other. IV. The revelation. God comes by special message to each man. The similarities and differences of these messages are full of practical lessons to us all.

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 1: The "band," 725. Ver. 3: The ninth hour, 806. Ver. 9: Prayer, 595; the sixth hour, 806; prayer on the housetop, 829.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 287, 2545, 3664, 1059. Vers. 2-7: Prose, 4447. Ver. 2: Prose, 1515-1517. Ver. 4: Prose, 10990; Poetical, 2005. Ver. 10-16: Prose, 8942. Ver. 11: Prose, 1718. Ver. 12: Prose, 4286. Ver. 15: Prose, 3341.

Blackboard.



This simple blackboard illustration explains itself. God is no respecter of persons. All are judged, not by creed or nationality, wealth or poverty, or by any other standard except the one of right living in his sight. We are all weighed in the balances of righteousness. Am I living as a righteous person should live? That is the question. The Gospel is for all men who will accept Christ as their Saviour; this is the significance of the object lesson taught to Peter.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God our Teacher.*
Introductory. [Print "Peter" and "Cornelius." Over the first print "Jew," and over the second "Gentile." Explain that Peter was still

in Joppa, an old city on the seacoast, where he had gone to visit the believers in Jesus, and where Dorcas was restored to life.]

About thirty miles from Joppa in Caesarea was a good man named Cornelius. He was a Roman soldier, and had the command of a hundred men. He believed in God, though he was a Gentile, and all his family did. He prayed a great deal, and gave much money to the poor.

Now, the Jews thought that they were the only people for whom God really cared. What a dreadful mistake!

They did not believe that he loved the Gentiles, or wanted to save them. [Ask children whom they think Jesus came to save?]

"Everybody," you say. God wanted Peter to learn this, and he used the Gentile to teach him.

[Locate Joppa and Caesarea on the map.]

1. Where was Peter when he brought Dorcas back to life? In Joppa here. Over there lived this Gentile, Cornelius. He was praying to God every day to know what was the truth, and to know what he ought to do.

How many think God would stoop down to hear the prayer of a Gentile soldier? God hears every prayer that comes from the heart. He has heard every little child who has truly prayed to him today. We must always remember,

"To say my prayers is not to pray,
Unless I mean the words I say."

Cornelius meant the words he said, and God sent an angel to tell him what to do.



[2. Show picture of an angel, explaining that angels are God's messengers, who do his errand. Tell how kindly the angel spoke to Cornelius, and what he told him to do.]

Did Cornelius obey quickly? Yes, all who truly want to please God obey his word as soon as they hear it. Cornelius sent two of his servants and a soldier right away to Joppa to find Peter. [Trace the way from Caesarea to Joppa on the map.] God thought about Cornelius and Peter, and had a lesson ready to teach each one. So God thinks about us, and has his lessons waiting for us. Do we want to learn them? Let us see if Peter and Cornelius were ready to learn.

3. While the servants of Cornelius were going to find Peter God was making him ready to receive them. He spoke to him in a vision. [Tell the vision Peter saw, explaining how a Jew felt about certain kinds of food.] How strange it seemed to Peter to have the Lord tell him to eat things which the Jewish law said were unclean!

He could not understand, and he was thinking about it when the three men came looking for him. In the next lesson we shall see what God had to teach Peter.

My Lesson. The centurion teaches us to obey quickly. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," is the word we should always have in our hearts.

Peter teaches us to trust God perfectly. When three strange men came to find him he was not afraid to go with them, because God said, "I have sent them."

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire.
Father, I stretch my hands to thee.
Weary child, by sin oppressed.
When Jesus comes to reward.
Gather them in, for there yet is room.

No. 2.

Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed,
Hark, my soul! it is the Lord.
The Saviour is calling.
Jesus, I come—I come for light.
"He was not willing."

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What was the name of the righteous centurion? **Cornelius.**
2. Who sent him to Peter? **An angel of God.**
3. What did Peter see while praying and hungry? **A vision of mixed food.**
4. Why did he object to eat it? **He regarded it as unclean.**
5. What did God say? **What God hath cleansed call thou not common.**
6. What did this teach? **That the old distinction between Jew and Gentile was broken down.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

40. What is declared of His helping us in prayer? **And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.—Romans viii. 26.**

A. D. 40.]

LESSON IV. PETER AT CESAREA.

[Oct. 23.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. Acts 10. 43.

Authorized Version.

Acts 10. 30-48. [Commit to memory verses 30-43.]

30 And Cor-ne-li-us said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cor-ne-li-us, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Jop'pa, and call hither Si-mon, whose surname is Pe'ter; he is lodged in the house of one Si'mon a tanner by the seaside: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 Then Pe'ter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Is-ra-el, preaching peace by Je'sus Christ: (he is Lord of all):

37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Ju-dea, and began from Gal'i-lee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God anointed Je'sus of Naz'a-reth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Je-ru'-sa-lem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Pe'ter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Pe'ter, because that on the Gen'tiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Pe'ter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Revised Version.

30 And Cor-ne-li-us said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour for prayer in my house: and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, and saith, Cor-ne-li-us, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Jop'pa, and call unto thee Si'mon, who is surnamed Pe'ter; he lodgeth in the house of Si'mon a tanner, by the seaside.

33 Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord. And Pe'ter opened his mouth and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. The word which he sent unto the children of Is-ra-el, preaching good tidings of peace by Je'sus Christ (he is Lord of all)—that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Ju-de'a, beginning from Gal'i-lee, after the baptism which John preached; even Je'sus of Naz'a-reth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Je-ru'-sa-lem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name everyone that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Pe'ter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were amazed, as many as came with Pe'ter, because that on the Gen'tiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

47 Then answered Pe'ter, Can any many forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Je'sus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

TIME.—A. D. 40. **PLACE.**—Caesarea Stratonis, on the coast of Palestine. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—Universal redemption.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Peter at Caesarea. Acts 10. 30-43.
Tu. Peter at Caesarea. Acts 10. 44-48.
W. The call. Acts 10. 21-29.
Th. No respect of persons. Rom. 2. 4-16.
F. Jesus helps a Gentile. Matt. 8. 5-13.
S. Power of the Spirit. Ezek. 37. 1-14.
S. Accepted in the beloved. Eph. 1. 1-14.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 108, New Canadian Hymnal.
 A charge to keep I have.
 No. 105, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Would Jesus have the sinner die?
 No. 106, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Pass me not, O gentle Saviour.

DOMINION HYMNAL

Hymns, Nos. 128, 130, 131.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. A Gentile's Call, v. 30-33.**
 Whom was Cornelius addressing?
 What evidence of his religious life did he give?
 What evidence of his acceptance did he receive?
 What direction was given him by the angel?
 What indication is there of his prompt obedience?
 What was his great desire?
- 2. An Apostle's Sermon, v. 34-43.**
 What new lesson had Peter learned?
 Who find favor with God?
 To whom was the Gospel first offered?
 What did it proclaim?
 Of what were the apostles the especial witnesses?
 What hope is here offered to the Gentiles?
 What is said in Rom. 10. 11, 12?
- 3. The Spirit's Power, v. 44-48.**
 What occurred at the close of the sermon?
 Describe in your own words how the Holy Ghost came in this case, as also in some other.
 What effect had his coming? (Verse 46.)
 How does he affect men now? (Eph. 5. 9; Gal. 5. 22, 23.)
 Have you received the Holy Ghost?
 What question about baptism, and what command, did Peter give?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That God hears the prayers of the sincere in heart?

2. That earnest prayer for divine guidance will be divinely answered?
3. That spiritual gifts are within the reach of all men?
4. That salvation is through faith in Jesus?

Hints for Home Study.

Find as follows reasons for the exclusiveness of the Jews:

1. God's instructions to Abraham to separate himself from the world.
2. Which of two distinguishing laws given to Moses built a wall between the Hebrews and Gentiles.
3. One or two texts from the prophets indorsing this exclusiveness.
4. Find the attitude of Christ toward this exclusiveness—(1) In what he says about the fulfillment of the law to the last jot and tittle; (2) in what he said to the Gentile woman who besought his help.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A Gentile's Call, v. 30-33.

- Who was this Gentile?
 How was Cornelius engaged four days before?
 Who came to him as he prayed?
 What words of encouragement did he hear?
 What command was given him?
 What did Cornelius then do?
 Why had he called his family and friends?

2. An Apostle's Sermon, v. 34-43.

- What apostle was this?
 What great lesson had he learned?
 Who is Lord of all?
 Through whom was peace preached to the Jews?
 How widely was this word preached?
 What four things are said about Jesus?
 Who were his witnesses?
 How had God honored Jesus?
 What proofs are given that Jesus rose from the dead?

- What were the apostles commanded to preach?
 What testimony did the prophets give? (GOLDEN TEXT.)
 What is the real spirit of all prophecy? (Rev. 19. 10.)

3. The Spirit's Power, v. 44-48.

- On whom did the Holy Spirit come?
 What evidence did they give of his power?
 What did the Jews think of this?
 What question did Peter ask?
 In whose name were they baptized?
 How may we secure the presence of the Holy Spirit? (Chap. 2. 28.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. That God's mercy extends to all men?
2. That Jesus makes pardon possible to all men?
3. That the Holy Spirit may come upon all men?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find and read the story of Peter's first meeting with the Master.

Try to find how many times in the New Testament angels appeared.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where did Peter go with the strange men? **To Cesarea.**

Who had sent for him to come there? **Cornelius.**

What did Peter ask Cornelius? **Why he had sent for him.**

What did he tell him was contrary to Jewish law? **To visit strange nations.**

What did the Jews call all Gentiles? **Unclean.**

What had God shown to Peter? **That no man was unclean.**

What did this mean? **That he loved all men alike.**

What did Cornelius tell Peter? **Of the angel's visit.**

Who came to Cornelius's house to meet Peter? **Many Gentiles.**

What did they want Peter to do? **To teach them.**

What did Peter then understand? **The meaning of the vision.**

Whom did he preach to them? **Jesus Christ.**

Whom did he say would be saved? **All believers in Jesus.**

What came upon the Gentiles while Peter spoke? **The Holy Ghost.**

What did Peter command? **That they be baptized.**

What does this lesson teach? **That God is no respecter of persons.**

Words with Little People.

ROOM FOR ALL { In God's heart.
In God's Church.
In the hearts of true Christians.

The great and wise, the little and ignorant, all are welcome.

Whisper Call.

"Come to Jesus."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**General Statement.**

The Gospel is ready to burst the bands of Judaism. Here and there are already a few individual believers outside the pale of Israel—a nobleman from Africa, a handful of liberal-minded men in Antioch; but there is need of apostolic authority and divine testimony to direct the Church to preach Jesus as the Saviour of the entire world. The hour has now come when the glorious heritage of universal salvation is to be made known. What must have been Peter the fisherman's thoughts as he walked in the sound of the surf to preach his first sermon to Gentiles! He and his companions arrive at Cesarea, and pass under the frowning walls of the prison where the great apostle to the Gentiles shall yet lie, and under the smiling walls of the palace where the same apostle shall preach to Felix and to Festus. They enter the Gentile dwelling place, forbidden to Jewish feet, and Peter now stands face to face with a Gentile congregation. He sets forth the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, without the requirement of circumcision or membership in the Jewish body. And before his address is done the descending Spirit, as at Pentecost, accredits his message as from God, and falls alike upon Jews and Gentiles, henceforth one in the brotherhood of Christ.

Verse 30. Cornelius. A Roman centurion, or commander of one hundred of the governor's guards. Our last lesson made us acquainted with him—a Roman and pagan by birth, a devout, consistent, kind-hearted worshiper of the Hebrew God.

Four days ago. See the account in verses 1-6.

Fasting. His fast may have been ritualistic, or it may have been unconscious—abstinence from food because of absorption in prayer. (1) *When the soul is with God the body may be forgotten.*

Until this hour. "Until this hour of the day."

The ninth hour. Three o'clock. The third of the daily times for worship among the Jews.

In my house. (2) *God rewards secret and family prayer as well as public worship.* A man. Here described according to his appearance, but in verse 8, according to the reality, as an angel.

31. Thy prayer is heard. Utterly sincere

prayers and deeds cannot fail to be heard and noticed in heaven. (3) *All true prayer on earth is heard in heaven.* (4) *God sees our works while he hears our words of prayer.*

32. Send therefore. The angel came to answer the centurion's prayer, but sent him to a saved man to learn the way to salvation. So Jesus spoke to Paul from the sky, but sent him to Ananias for religious guidance. So always (5) *God makes saved men the chief means of other men's salvation.* **Simon.** This was the apostle's true name. **Surname is Peter.** "The Rock," a name given him by Jesus. See John 1. 42, and Matt. 16. 18. The elements of leadership in his character have been frequently alluded to in these lessons. **The house of one Simon a tanner.** The house is still shown, perhaps on the true location, since it is outside the town, and has a spring of

water in its courtyard; both of which would be found at a tannery in the East. (6) *The places unnoticed by man may be the ones best known to the angels.*

33. Immediately. (7) *One who is in earnest will not delay to find the way of salvation. I sent to thee. How we have already seen. Thou hast well done. Courteously, Christianly done. Thou art come. Having made a journey of thirty-five miles. Are we all here. How many we cannot tell, but the story would seem to imply that a considerable company of friendly Gentiles was present. Before God. In God's presence. To hear all things. Men often listened to the apostles with critical curiosity, but these hearts listened with willing acceptance. Modern preachers and teachers would be more than human did they not grow weary of the alternations between idle curiosity and listless inattention which characterize so much of church and Sunday school life; but he who is faithful will find some eager souls who, like Cornelius, listen not to the man, but to the messenger of God.*

34. Of a truth I perceive. He had always believed this vaguely, but the fullness and grandeur of the truth he now for the first time realized. **No respecter of persons.** (8) *How many Christians nowadays thoroughly believe this, and act with thorough consistency?*

35. Fearth him, and worketh righteousness. Two universal requirements—a reverence for God as he is known, and a life which is the outgrowth of that reverence. Among those who have heard of Jesus this will be shown by faith in him; among those ignorant of Christ, by righteousness as a principle of life. **Accepted with him.** Stands in the enjoyment of the divine favor, and with the privilege of eternal life.

36. The word. The Gospel. **Sent unto the children of Israel** first of all, that they might give it to all the world. **He is Lord of all.** Peter wished to guard against the impression that Jesus was no more than a religious teacher or a prophet. (9) *He rules all hearts by divine right.*

37. That word . . . ye know. This shows that Cornelius and his Gentile friends were not ignorant of Christianity, which had been introduced into Cesarea by Philip the evangelist. They had doubtless attended the synagogue of the Jews, had heard the discussions on the subject, were ready to believe, but were perplexed.

38. How God anointed. Revised Version, "Even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him." The same word means Christ, Messiah, and Anointed, and the expression might read, "How God Christ-ed, Messiah-ed Jesus;" that is, made him the Christ. **Went about doing good.** An epitome of the Saviour's life on earth. **Healing all that were oppressed of the devil.**

As if the cure of demoniacs were the most astonishing act of our Lord's life. But in a much broader sense than Peter yet knew did Christ release those that were "oppressed of the devil."

39. We are witnesses. It was the special mission of the apostles to bear testimony from personal knowledge to the facts of Christ's life, resurrection, and ascension.

40. Showed him openly. "Gave him to be made manifest," by many proofs, pointed to in the next verse.

41. Unto witnesses chosen. A sufficient number for evidence, but not to gratify curiosity. Over five hundred saw him at one time (1 Cor. 15. 6). **Eat and drink with him.** This would clearly show that the appearances were not imaginary.

42. He commanded us. "Charged us." **To preach . . . and to testify.** True preaching is witness-bearing, and Sunday school teaching should have the same characteristic. (10) *The faithful preacher fails not to proclaim Christ's judgment as well as his mercy. Judge of the quick and dead.* "Quick" means living. (11) *Christ is our judge now; he will also announce our doom at last.*

43. All the prophets. The prophets had a double mission—to protest against the sins of their times, and to point to the coming Redeemer. **Through his name.** In ancient times names were nearly all truly descriptive, and "name" as here used stands for power, mission, character, life. **Whoever believeth.** Faith is the one requirement; not circumcision nor any other rite. **Remission of sins.** The great need of every human heart.

44. The Holy Ghost fell. A divine spiritual illumination, manifesting itself on these Gentiles in the same way as on the Jewish believers at Pentecost. **On all them which heard.** On the Jewish believers who had come with Peter from Joppa, and on Cornelius and his fellow-Gentiles. (12) *God's Spirit always bridges social gulfs and unites hearts in holy fellowship.*

45, 46. They of the circumcision. Christian Jews. **On the Gentiles also.** Just as Peter's vision had suggested. **Heard them speak with tongues.** Perhaps no full explanation of this miraculous accompaniment of the pentecostal blessing can now be given. It was repeated many times in the early Christian Church, and from Paul's letters it would appear that it was not always free from abuses. It is here mentioned as an evident manifestation of the Holy Ghost. **Magnify God.** Without submitting themselves to the rites of Judaism they bore all the fruits of true godliness.

47. Can any man forbid water. This verse is notable for several reasons: 1. It shows that Peter was here cautiously feeling his way.

Though consciously led by the Holy Spirit, he knew that the six brethren who accompanied him, and the apostles at Jerusalem, were similarly guided, and he makes an appeal to their sanctified judgment; a sort of mental appeal even to those who were far off in Jerusalem—Which of all of you, brother apostles, would hesitate to baptize these? 2. It shows that it is a sacred duty to attend to each of the simple rites which our Lord prescribed: Peter considered baptism obligatory on these men who had just received the

greatest possible spiritual blessing. 3. It showed that "the Holy Ghost is not tied even to the most sacred ordinances."—*Glong.*

48. He commanded them to be baptized.

It has been suggested that Peter was led by the same reasons that afterward governed Paul not to baptize many converts, lest a superstitious feeling should arise that such people were, in some half-magical manner, better for having been baptized by an apostle.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 30. Four days ago, until this hour. The words "I was fasting," found in the Authorized Version, are properly omitted from the Revised. They are not a part of the original text. But the resultant rendering in the revision, though very literal, is neither clear nor idiomatic. The meaning is, "Just four days ago," "It was four days ago, counting from this very hour." Suppose Cornelius had his vision on Monday at three P. M., and his two servants and the devout soldier left that afternoon (verse 7), then Peter's vision occurred on Tuesday at noon (verse 9). The next day, Wednesday, Peter and his friends started with the three men from Caesarea (verse 23), twenty-eight miles distant, and reached the house of Cornelius the following day (verse 24), which, according to our supposition, would be Thursday. At the ninth hour, that is, three P. M., Cornelius refers to his vision as having occurred precisely four days before. We should call this just three days before, but it would be four days according to the Jewish method of including both the first and last days in their count.

34. Peter opened his mouth and said.

Peter's sermon, as reported here, can be read aloud in the original in less than two minutes. Its extreme brevity makes it probable that we have only the outline of his discourse. After stating the new revelation which has just been made to him—that God is no respecter of persons, but accepts in every nation every man that feareth him and worketh righteousness—Peter proceeds to tell the story of Jesus from his baptism to his resurrection. These are almost precisely the limits which Peter names in 1. 22, and they are exactly the limits of the gospel of Mark. This sermon of Peter's has been called "the gospel of Mark in a nutshell." Peter then declares that Jesus is ordained of God to be the Judge of all; and that all the prophets testify that forgiveness of sins is to come through faith in him.

44. They of the circumcision . . . as many as came with Peter. It appears from this that several Jewish believers accompanied Peter from Joppa and were witnesses of this pentecostal baptism of believing Gentiles.

47. Can any man forbid the water.

When God had granted the greater and symbolized baptism of the Holy Ghost it was manifestly absurd to refuse the rite, which was a mere type of the former. This argument was used with conclusive force by Peter in explaining his course to the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem (11. 17. 18).

The Lesson Council.

Question 4. What was the gift of the Holy Spirit?

It was the impartation of the Holy Ghost to the believing individual. It was not "an influence," an "abstraction," or a "power." It was God in the believer, the personal indwelling of the Spirit, according to the promise of Jesus (John 16. 7-15), and with his presence came the "power." This gift was received by faith and subsequent to conversion (Acts 19. 2). The Spirit was previously present in a measure admonishing and guiding; now he comes in a fullness peculiar to believers. He is now the indwelling Presence manifest in various gifts, personal graces, and powers (1 Cor. 12. 7-11; Gal. 5. 22-26). It is the privilege of believers now to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2. 39; 1 Cor. 2. 12, 13).

A careful examination of all the passages where this gift of the Holy Ghost—called also the baptism, the anointing, the sealing, the earnest, etc.—is mentioned shows that it means primarily the receiving clear witness to our acceptance with God and our adoption into his family. This was John Wesley's view, and it is most emphatically ours. More than anything else what we call the witness of the Spirit has plain marks of correspondence with the baptism of the Holy Ghost described in the New Testament. Everyone who is truly born again under this dispensation receives the Holy Spirit to dwell in his heart.

1. In relation to the past, the fulfillment of prophecy (Joel 2. 28-32) and promise (Acts 1. 5).
2. In relation to God's other work, the last of a series of divine acts intended to make possible man's redemption from sin and his restoration to the image of God.
3. In essence and effect, the

nature of God taking its abode in the human heart, and producing by this union, among other results, (1) enlightenment (John 14. 26; 16. 13), (2) purification (Rom. 16. 5; Titus 3. 5), (3) power (Acts 1. 8; Rom. 15. 19), (4) joy (Gal. 5. 22; 1 Thess. 1. 6).

To the Gentile converts on the occasion of this lesson it was the incoming of the third person of the Trinity promised by the Saviour (John 15. 26). He was the same person that was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Sometimes he produced miracles, either in speaking or hearing, as on the occasion of this lesson and the Pentecost baptism.

That spiritual anointing for a disciple promised of the Father (Acts 1. 4), prerequisite to reception of power (Acts 1. 8), alike available for Jew and Gentile under apostles' ministry—on condition of submission, consecration, and faith. The product of this gift is understanding of "the way of the Lord," aptness to teach in spiritual demonstration; so that at Cesarea (Acts 10. 15), Jerusalem (Acts 2. 41), Germany under Luther, England under Whitefield and Wesley, America in 1857, India and Africa under Thoburn and Taylor, by the Spirit's use of tongues to magnify the Lord, the substratum of society is aroused and a nation born in a day

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

God's Grace to the Seeker.

I. HIS PRAYER HEARD.

Thy prayer is heard. v. 31.

"He will draw nigh." James 4. 8.

"Prayer....avaleth much." James 5. 16.

II. HIS DEEDS HONORED.

Alms....in remembrance. v. 31.

"In no wise lose....reward." Matt. 10. 42.

"Supply all your need." Phil. 4. 18, 19.

III. HIS SEARCH DIRECTED.

Send....call hither Simon. v. 32.

"How shall they hear?" Rom. 10. 14, 15.

"He gave some....evangelists." Eph. 4. 11, 12.

IV. HIS REDEEMER PROVIDED.

Preaching peace by Jesus Christ. v. 36.

"Reconciled....by Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 5. 18.

"Peace through the blood of his cross." Col. 1. 20.

V. HIS FAITH REWARDED.

Whosoever believeth....remission. v. 43.

"The promise of faith." Gal. 3. 22.

"Whosoever believeth....not perish." John 3. 16.

VI. THE SPIRIT BESTOWED.

The Holy Ghost fell. v. 44.

"Might receive....the Spirit." Gal. 3. 14.

"The Spirit....beareth witness." Rom. 8. 16.

Thoughts for Young People.

God's Answer to the Seeker's Prayer.

1. God hears the prayer of every earnest soul which approaches him. (Verse 31.)

2. God honors the good works done in the spirit of love to man. (Verse 31.)

3. God sends his angels to give direction to those who are sincerely seeking for light. (Verses 30-32.)

4. God provides instruction for those who sincerely desire it. (Verse 32.)

5. God opens the way for the proclamation of Christ and salvation to those who are ready to receive it. (Verses 36-42.)

6. God extends the forgiveness of sins to those who sincerely seek mercy. (Verse 43.)

7. God bestows the influence of the Holy Spirit upon those who seek after it. (Verse 44.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Cornelius is speaking, and amid strange circumstances. The strangeness is not in the fact that he has called his kinsmen and near friends together and that he is speaking in their presence. But who is that opposite Cornelius and whom he is addressing? It is Peter, who had his Jewish scruples about mingling with Gentiles, and yet had his profound yearning over all souls; Peter before whom still hangs, like a cloud above the Great Sea, that white sheet let down from heaven and filled with such a strange company; Peter in whose ears rings yet the solemn voice not to put away as unclean those whom God hath accepted as clean. Any preparation in this for a great manifestation of divine interest in the Gentiles? Does thought on this very subject arouse the interest of Peter, and give that deep, searching look to his dark eyes? Is the wall between Jew and Gentile coming down in Peter? But Cornelius is speaking. Peter listens. The centurion tells about his wonderful season of prayer when, lo, at his side glowed the lustrous form of that angel! What seriousness, awe in the centurion's tones! And the angel tells him to send to—Joppa—and to get—Peter—and—Peter will speak to them! And here they are, rows of eager Gentiles, and now let the Jew preach to them about the marvelous things of God! What will Peter do?

Does he realize that he has come to a corner in the life of the Church, a marvelous turn in its history? Will he shelve his opportunity? No, he sees the great sheet let down from heaven, hears the approving voice of God, and goes on. In a simple way he tells of the accessibility of God to all souls, and then what scenes in the life of Jesus he touches upon! We see one who "went about doing good." We follow him into the homes of the sick, out where the lowly graves are, into the

haunts of lonely lepers, and the wild fastnesses that the demon-haunted souls hide in. And then we go to Calvary's cross and the hushed Easter-garden, only to witness the marvelous love and power of the Son of God who came to bring all souls to himself and to one another.

O wonderful hour! And as Peter speaks, what a strange presence moves all about them, sways them, lifts them, and then what an ecstatic uttering of tongues! Yes, upon these Gentiles wait Pentecost wonders! Marvelous attestation of the approbation of God! Day of his right hand! But Peter has a question to ask: Can any forbid water to these Gentile converts? Is not the Gentile reciprocity of the Holy Ghost as assured a fact as that of any Jew on Pentecost day? Solemn stillness now that deepens in the midst of these Gentile disciples! They come forward one by one. They bow as the triune name is invoked in solemn baptism. The sacred fellowship of discipleship in Jesus finds expression. But when this day of wonders is passing away, and twilight sinks and deepens upon the surface of the great sea, what is there left in Caesarea of the separating wall between Jew and Gentile? The Church of the living God has had marvelous expansion, that day, in a humble room in Caesarea by the sea.

By Way of Illustration.

"We are all here present before God." When Macdonald was trying to lead up his men to a desperate charge his eye, sweeping the hill through a glass, caught sight of Napoleon. Rising in his stirrups, Macdonald said: "Soldiers, the eye of Napoleon is upon us;" and they went up and swept the enemy before them. In what a blessed spirit shall we do our work, if we remember that we are in the presence of our Master. All councils and conferences where Christ is have a brotherly spirit and glorious results.

Verses 34-38. We say in glib familiar phrase that the basis of Christianity is the brotherhood of humanity. Which of us gives the recognition of imitation to the astonishing example of Jesus in this regard? Christ was the consistent democrat. Social rank simply did not exist for him. Caste he scorned. A fisherman was his most intimate friend. He accepted the hospitality of an ostracized man. He conversed fearlessly and naturally with abandoned women. He did not refuse to penitent outcasts the preciousness of his personal friendship. Vulgar natures he treated with the patience of high refinement. The common people loved him.—*Elizabeth S. Phelps.*

What is the use of being called by the name of Christ unless we live his spirit? "Either change your name or honor it," said Alexander to an undutiful soldier who bore his name. When a little

girl was asked what it was to be a Christian she answered, "To do what Jesus would if he was a little girl and lived at our house."

Verses 44-48. Dr. Cuyler wrote thus of a Christian convention in Brooklyn: "The convention closed by joining hands and singing: 'Say, brother, will you meet us?' I saw one of Dr. Storrs's deacons and a Quaker and a Methodist standing with clasped hands, and flanked by a Baptist and a Presbyterian clergyman. It reminded me of the time when we were college students, standing thus in the chemical lecture hall, and the electric current leaped from the charged battery through the whole circle in an instant."

A Hindoo and New Zealander met upon the deck of a missionary ship. They had been converted from their heathenism and were brothers in Christ, but they could not speak to each other. They pointed to their Bibles, shook hands, smiled at each other, but that was all. At last a happy thought occurred to the Hindoo. With sudden joy, he exclaimed, "Hallelujah!" The New Zealander, in delight, cried out, "Amen!" These two words, not found in their own heathen tongues, were to them the beginning of "one language and one speech."

The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw the map, showing the relative position of Jerusalem, Joppa, and Caesarea....The character of Cornelius is here exhibited....Circumstances which made the faith and zeal of Cornelius remarkable: (1) His heathen origin; (2) His godless surroundings; (3) His rank and station, etc.... The two visions and their significance....Steps in God's plans leading up to this work of Gentile salvation: (1) Samaritans converted; (2) Ethiopian; (3) Antioch (chap. 11. 19, 20)....How to seek after God. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline.).... How God rewards those who seek after him.... How Christ is preached to the seeker: (1) His anointing; (2) His power; (3) His character; (4) His works; (5) His death and resurrection; (6) His office as Judge; (7) His office as Saviour.... What does this lesson call upon us to do: (1) As sinners? (2) As seekers? (3) As Christians?

References.

FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 7229, 10888, 10885, 11723, 11725, 4292-4300, 2341, 2342, 2348, 5361. Ver. 31: Prose, 2037, 3961, 6894, 12194. Ver. 32: Prose, 2676. Ver. 35: Prose, 5989. Ver. 36: Prose, 4540 8882-8884.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Door Wide Open.*

Introductory. One Christmas morning a great many boys stood on the sidewalk near the door of

a hall in a large city. They were poor boys, and were waiting for the door to open and let them in to a free Christmas dinner which some kind friend had provided for them.

Now and then the door would open a little way and a few boys would be taken in. This was to save the rush of the crowd.

But the time came when the door was opened wide, and then all could go in who pleased.

To be taught: 1. Whose is the open door? 2. Who opened it? 3. Who may enter it, and how?

[Make an open door on the board. Above it print "The Door of Faith." Talk about faith, helping children to understand that a child who has faith in papa and mamma may know how to have faith in God.]

[Make a cross on the board and a heart. Recall the old story of the heart going away from God, choosing its own selfish pleasures and going its own wrong way. Print inside the heart "Far from God."]

Did God then forget his children? O, no! he could not do that, for he is "our Father." What does the cross say? [Print upon it "Love," and teach that "faith" in Jesus is the faith that opens the door. Tell once more the ever new story of redemption. Some little one may hear it to-day for the last time.] Here then is the open door which God had made—Jesus, the Saviour, dying on the cross for us.

2. [Print "Peter," "Gentiles."] Was Peter a Jew or a Gentile? What was Cornelius? What did God send to these two men to teach them a great lesson? Who can tell what the angel said to Cornelius? How did he show his faith in God? What vision was sent to Peter? How did he show his faith? [Trace the journey on the map from Joppa to Cesarea.]

When Peter came to the house of Cornelius he found a company there waiting to see him. Cornelius had called his friends to learn from Peter, too. He did not want to have all the good news to himself. This tells us that he had not a selfish heart.



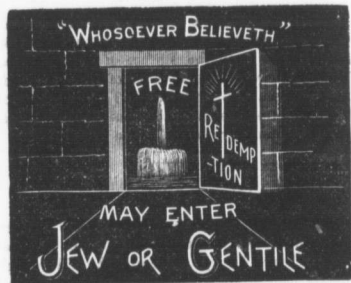
When Peter saw this company of Gentiles waiting for his words he remembered his vision! Then he knew what it meant. God would not have him call anything common or unclean! Peter's eyes were opened to see the great truth that God loves everybody—big and little, good and bad, wise and simple. All are dear to him because they are his children.

Peter did not want to ask anybody what he should do. He began right away to preach the Gospel of Jesus to these Gentiles. He would not

have done this a few days before. But now God had opened his eyes to see that he loved a Gentile just as well as a Jew. So God used Peter to open the door of faith to the Gentiles.

3. [Print in large, colored letters above the open door "Whosoever Will." Tell that God says this. Read from the Bible the passage in which the words are found.] Any man or woman, any boy or girl, who wants to may enter this open door. When? Just now—as soon as they will hear and believe the story of Jesus, the Saviour. How? [Make steps leading to the door; on the first print "Prayer," on the second "Repentance," on the third "Faith," on the fourth "Right-doing." Explain that faith without right-doing—trying to please Jesus in all things—will not take one inside the door.]

Blackboard.



Here is an open door; beyond it is a fountain of living water. What does it say above the fountain? Free. Yes, free! That is a grand word. Free to the thirsty one, and this door wide open. What does it say on the door? Redemption. The redemption of man has opened the door. Who may go in? "Whosoever believeth." Is that all? No, "In him." Read all of verse 43. Shall receive—what? Yes, the water of life is free. But who are included in the word "whosoever?" Everyone, bond and free, Jew, heathen, or Gentile, and, best of all, he counts me in the "whosoever."

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Thou art my Shepherd.
How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.
Come with thy sins to the fountain.
Who'll be the next to follow Jesus?
Jesus, my Lord, to thee I cry.

No. 2.

The Saviour calls in accents clear.

Seek, my soul, the narrow gate.
I bring to thee, my Saviour.
He has come! he has come!
How sweetly sounds the call.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was the first Christian among the Gentiles? **Cornelius, a Roman centurion.**
2. Who preached the Gospel to him? **Peter, the apostle.**
3. How did Peter say all men could receive remission of sins? **By believing in Jesus.**

4. What came upon those who heard white Peter was speaking? **The Holy Ghost.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

41. Where is He spoken of as teaching us to understand the Scriptures?

When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth. . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.—John xvi. 13, 14.

A. D. 41-43.] LESSON V. THE GOSPEL PREACHED AT ANTIOCH. [Oct. 30.]

GOLDEN TEXT. A great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Acts 11. 21.

Authorized Version.

Acts 11. 19-30. [*Commit to memory verses 21-24.*]

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Ste'phen traveled as far as Phe-ni'cia, and Cy'prus, and An'ti-och, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cy'prus and Cy-re'ne, which, when they were come to An'ti-och, spake unto the Gre'cians, preaching the Lord Je'sus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Je-ru'sa-lem: and they sent forth Bar'na-bas, that he should go as far as An'ti-och.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Bar'na-bas to Tar'sus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto An'ti-och. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Chris'tians first in An'ti-och.

27 And in these days came prophets from Je-ru'sa-lem unto An'ti-och.

28 And there stood up one of them named Ag'a-bus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Clau'di-us Cae'sar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Ju-de'a:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Bar'na-bas and Saul.

Revised Version.

19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Ste'phen traveled as far as Phe-ni'cia, and Cy'prus, and An'ti-och, speaking the word to none save only to the Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cy'prus and Cy-re'ne, who, when they were come to An'ti-och, spake unto the Greeks also, 21 preaching the Lord Je'sus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that 22 believed turned unto the Lord. And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was at Je-ru'sa-lem: and they sent forth 23 Bar'na-bas as far as An'ti-och: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added 25 unto the Lord. And he went forth to Tar'sus 26 to seek for Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto An'ti-och. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in An'ti-och.

27 Now in these days there came down prophets 28 from Je-ru'sa-lem unto An'ti-och. And there stood up one of them named Ag'a-bus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to 29 pass in the days of Clau'di-us. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that 30 dwelt in Ju-de'a: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Bar'na-bas and Saul.

TIME.—A. D. 41-43. **PLACE.**—Antioch in Syria. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The Church of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The Gospel preached at Antioch. Acts 11. 19-24.
Tu. The Gospel preached at Antioch. Acts 11. 25-30.
W. Persecution predicted. Matt. 10. 16-23.
Th. Persecution overruled. Phil. 1. 12-21.
F. Spreading abroad. 1 Thess. 1. 1-10.
S. The light is come. Isa. 60. 1-6.
Sa. Power of God. 1 Cor. 2. 1-8.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 229, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Again we meet with one accord.
 No. 231, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Oh, happy day that fixed my choice.
 No. 230, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Praise the Rock of our salvation.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 70, 72, 69.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. The Gift of Judea to Antioch, v. 19-21.**
 By what were the disciples scattered abroad? (Verse 19.)
 Where did they go?
 To whom did those preach who are mentioned in verse 19?
 What limitation did they make in preaching the Gospel?
 What exceptions were there to this rule?
 How did the Gentiles receive the word?
 What is it to believe?
 What to turn to the Lord?
 From what are those "converts" who thus turn?
 Why may we regard these as "from all nations?"
- 2. The Good Work in Antioch, v. 22-26.**
 Why was Barnabas sent to Antioch?
 What encouragement did he give the disciples?
 What gave his words greater weight?
 What journey did he take, and why?
 What was the result of the two apostles' labor?
 What new name was given to the disciples here?
 What is meant by "the hand of the Lord?" (Verse 21.)
 How can it be with those who preach?
 What effect of this is mentioned in verse 21?
- 3. The Gift of Antioch to Judea, v. 27-30.**

What was foretold by a messenger from the mother church?

- When did it come to pass?
 Of what was this prophecy itself a fulfillment? (Acts 2. 16-18.)
 What relief did the church at Antioch provide?
 What is the rule by which all our gifts should be measured?
 What holy work did Barnabas do?
 What did Agabus do? (Verse 28.)
 What did the disciples do?

Practical Teachings.

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
 1. That a full heart makes a free gift?
 2. That God brings good to his Church out of the trials of his saints?
 3. That the prejudices of men break down before the influence of the Holy Spirit?

Hints for Home Study.

- Find what you can concerning this Antioch, and mark the difference between it and another city of the same name.
 Give the names of the three great cities of the world in Paul's time, and something of their peculiarities.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. The Gift of Judea to Antioch, v. 19-21.**
 Why did the disciples leave Judea?
 How far did they go in their travels?
 To whom only did they at first preach?
 To whom did some afterward preach?
 Who were these latter preachers?
 What results followed their word? (GOLDEN TEXT.) Why?
- 2. The Good Work in Antioch, v. 22-26.**
 Who heard of this good work in Antioch?
 Who were sent to inspect the work?
 How did Barnabas feel?
 What did he urge them to do?
 How is Barnabas described?
 In character whom did he resemble? (Chap. 6. 5.)
 From Antioch where did Barnabas go, and for whom?
 Where had he known Saul? (Chap. 9. 27.)
 How long did these two remain at Antioch?
 What new name there came into use?
 By what names had they been called before?
- 3. The Gift of Antioch to Judea, v. 27-30.**
 Who came from Jerusalem to Antioch?
 What did one of them foretell?
 When did this famine occur?
 What did the disciples at Antioch do?
 Who bore their gifts to Judea?
 What lesson had these disciples learned? (See chap. 20. 35.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. That God's enemies sometimes help the truth?
2. How we should feel when God's cause prospers?
3. How we can "fulfill the law of Christ?" (Gal. 6. 2.)

Home Work for Young Bereans.

With whom was Barnabas afterward associated? Find if you can what were the three greatest cities of the world in the days of Paul.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where did believers in Jesus go during the persecution? **To towns and cities abroad.**

To whom did they preach at first? **To Jews only.**

Where did some begin preaching to Gentiles? **At Antioch.**

How was their work blessed? **Many believed.**
Who was sent to visit Antioch? **Barnabas.**
By whom was he sent? **By the church in Jerusalem.**

What did they fear? **That all was not right.**
With what was Barnabas filled? **With the Holy Ghost.**

What did he see? **That God was in the work.**

Whom did he send for to help him? **Saul.**
How long did Saul and Barnabas stay in Antioch? **A whole year.**

Where were the disciples first called Christians? **In Antioch.**

What came upon the land about this time? **A famine.**

What did the believers in Antioch do? **Gave help to their poor brethren.**

Who went to Jerusalem to carry money and food? **Barnabas and Saul.**

How did these believers show that they loved Christ? **By loving their brethren.**

Words with Little People.

Little Christians, good and true,
Loving deeds you all may do;
Others' sorrows you may share;
Others' burdens you may bear.

Whisper Precept.

"Love one another."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**General Statement.**

About the time of the conversion of Cornelius at Cesarea another episode occurred in the history of the Christian Church, freighted with marvelous consequences. A number of Gentiles, sincere inquirers after God's truth, were converted by the preaching of certain foreign-born Jews who had become Christians in Jerusalem, and had been driven thence by the persecution which arose about Stephen. The news of this impressed the Jerusalem Christians strangely, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch to ascertain the genuineness of the work. He was delighted when he saw indications of the presence of the Spirit of God in Gentile hearts, and departed at once to Tarsus to secure Saul as a fellow-laborer. For a year the two friends preached in Antioch, and many were brought to Christ by their ministrations. Then it was revealed to them by God's prophets that starvation would shortly prevail far and wide, and liberal contribution was made for the help of the poor brethren in Judea. This was a natural outgrowth of the spirit of Christ—it was committed to the hands of Barnabas and Saul, and they conveyed it to Jerusalem.

Verse 19. Now. The narrative here turns back about three years. **They which were scattered abroad.** See Acts 8. 1-4. The result of the persecution that arose about Stephen was the same as that of all other persecutions—to more widely disseminate the truth. **Traveled.** They went in all directions, and wherever they went they took the Gospel. **Phenice.** Phoenicia. The country around Tyre and Sidon, coast land lying between Lebanon and the sea. Many Jews lived here on friendly terms with the natives. **Cyprus.** The birthplace of Barnabas, a large island in the northeast part of the Mediterranean. **Antioch.** The third city of the Roman world, famous for culture, splendor, luxurious vice, and half a million people made up of every race. It was in northern Syria, near the mouth of the Orontes.

Its cosmopolitan character and wide influence made it a natural center for the Church as soon as Christianity had been implanted there. **To none but unto the Jews.** These men, though persecuted on Stephen's account, had failed to catch Stephen's broad spirit. (1) *Every hearer of the word should be a preacher of it.*

20. Some of them. Of these preaching disciples. **Men of Cyprus and Cyrene.** Hebrews by race, but born abroad, and, because of constant contact with Gentiles, affected by broader religious views than prevailed in Palestine. "Cyrene" lay west of Egypt in northern Africa. **Come to Antioch.** In their flight from the persecution at Jerusalem. **Spake unto the Grecians.** Better, "preached unto the Greeks also." Grecian Jews are not here meant, but

heathens. They are called Greeks generally, as Europeans are to-day called Franks by orientals. They were probably reverent men of many races, made neighbors by association in the great cosmopolitan city. (2) *Thus by degrees does God ever lead his cause to higher and wider triumph.*

21. The hand of the Lord. As "name" stands for character, so "hand" stands for power, of which the hand is the symbol. **Was with them.** (3) *Belief leads to repentance, and repentance is followed by faith.* (4) *Those who labor for God may be sure of his presence and aid.* **A great number believed.** The meaning of the Greek is, rather, that a great number of those who believed turned unto the Lord. Then, as now, many were intellectually convinced who had not the moral courage to act out their convictions and devote their lives to Christ's service.

22. Tidings of these things. This was a terrible thing in the eyes of many Christian Jews—that heathen Gentiles should enlist in the service of the Hebrew Messiah without first becoming circumcised; and doubtless they straightway sent word to the Christian authorities at Jerusalem. If the mighty barrier which separated Jews from Gentiles was to melt away under the Gospel, what was the use of being a Jew? This question Paul afterwards discussed at length in his epistles. **The church . . . in Jerusalem** was, singularly enough, more intensely Jewish and more intensely Christian than the Church in other places. **Barnabas.** A man of singularly trustworthy character, who seems to have been equally revered by Jews and Christians alike. **As far as Antioch.** The apostles felt confident that Barnabas was well able to properly estimate the character of this work, to suppress it if it were evil, and to direct it if it were good.

23. Seen the grace of God. The work of grace was manifestly God's work. **Was glad.** There were some Christians, even in those days, mean enough to feel sorry that the Gospel showed signs of leaping over the bounds of Judaism; but Barnabas had no such narrow soul. He was glad that so many sinners were converted; he was gladder that a new and vast field, bounded only by the human race, was opening before the Gospel. **Exhorted them all.** Instead of prescribing ritualistic practices, or checking the zeal of the earnest preachers and zealous converts, he urges them all to fuller consecration and more active aggression.

24, 25. For. Here comes the reason why Barnabas so sincerely rejoiced in the work at Antioch. **A good man.** Generous, broad-minded, **full of the Holy Ghost,** and, therefore, gifted with divine insight and foresight. **Faith.** Not only trust in God, but lofty loyalty; not only

faith, but faithfulness. He understood the breadth of the Gospel plans, and he proposed to stand for them, regardless of consequences. **Much people was added.** Barnabas's noble qualities of soul were like a whole army of reinforcement. **Departed Barnabas to Tarsus.** Across a narrow arm of the Mediterranean to Saul's native city in Cilicia. **To seek Saul.** Generous souls recognize each other at the first glance, and Barnabas knew that Saul's sympathies and his own were alike; he also knew Saul's thorough consecration to Christ's cause, and may have known something of his extraordinary intellectual powers.

26. When he had found him. Evidently after search. Very likely in a tent-making shop. So truly great men always go about their ordinary duties till God reveals extraordinary duties. The great man is not he who seeks to do great things, but he who does small things greatly. **A whole year.** About 43 A. D. **Called Christians first.** Nearly all great movements have received their names from their enemies. It has been remarked that this name itself united the three great races of the world at that time, like the inscription on the cross. It contains the Hebrew conception of the Redeemer—Messiah—expressed by a Greek word—Christ—with a Latin termination.

27. These days. While Paul and Barnabas dwelt in Antioch. **Came prophets.** Men who uttered truth by divine insight, but who did not always foretell future events. (5) *From insight to foresight the journey is not far.*

28. Agabus. A young man; twenty years later we hear from him again (Acts 21. 10). **Great dearth.** Where there are no telegraphs to inform of need, and no railroads to carry swift assistance, and no popular government to control men in power, and no Christian spirit to prompt generosity, famines must be frequent. They were in ancient times; they are to-day in the over-crowded Orient. **All the world.** Generally, universally; not that every village should be reduced to starvation, but that want would be felt in all directions. In A. D. 43-45 thousands perished in Judea by famine. **Claudius Cesar.** The fourth Roman emperor. He reigned from A. D. 41-54.

29. The disciples. Gentiles. Their gift was to Jewish believers in Christ. It was spontaneous and noble-hearted. **According to his ability** is the way each one of us should give. **In Judea.** Many of the converts there, as elsewhere, were poor. Probably, also, for several reasons, Christian profession was a greater obstacle to worldly success in Jewry than in other places.

30. By the hands of Barnabas and Saul. "This does not readily harmonize with Gal. 2. 1; but Paul in his epistle mentions only those visits to Jerusalem which were of importance to the establishment of the apostolic office."—*Gloag.*

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 19. They therefore that were scattered abroad. By these words Luke carries his readers intentionally back to the point of time described by almost identical expressions in 8. 4. He wishes to trace another train of circumstances which dated back to the eventful period of Stephen's martyrdom.

20. Spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. The most ancient manuscripts do not agree with regard to this passage, many of them having, instead of the word for "Greeks," the similar one used to describe the Grecian Jews, or the Hellenists. See 6. 1. But as the latter were Jews, and there is a manifest contrast between the practice described in verse 19 and that referred to in this verse, the conclusion seems quite irresistible that the original reading was *Hellenas*, "Greeks," and not *Hellenistas*, "Grecian Jews."

22. They sent forth Barnabas. It is the startling report that some of the scattered believers are preaching to the Greeks, that is, Gentiles, in Antioch, which stirs up the church at Jerusalem to send Barnabas thither to inquire into the matter. The mission of Barnabas to Antioch apparently, but not certainly, followed the return of Peter from Cesarea to Jerusalem. At all events the impression made by the narrative is that these unknown "men of Cyprus and Cyrene" were not dependent upon Peter for an example, but were following the guidance of the Spirit in their own hearts when they began to preach the Lord Jesus to the Gentiles. And Barnabas, the eloquent "son of exhortation," "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," was the providential man for such a crisis. After exhorting the new converts to steadfastness, he hastens to bring Saul from Tarsus, and by a year of united efforts they make Antioch a new missionary center, from which were to radiate world-wide evangelizing efforts.

26. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. The followers of Jesus had been called "disciples," or "disciples of the Lord" (9. 1); "the brethren" (9. 30); "saints" (9. 13); "those that were of the way" (9. 2); and "believers" (5. 14). But now first at Antioch do they receive the name which was to be most characteristic and permanent in history. It was apparently neither employed originally by the believers themselves, nor applied to them by the Jews, but invented by some of the Gentile outsiders at Antioch, and cheerfully adopted by the followers of Christ. It is a word "written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin." Since the idea of the Messiah is strictly Hebrew, the root of the word is Greek and the form of the adjective is Latin. Thus we have the Herodians (Matt. 22. 16) mentioned in the New Testament. The Romans spoke

also of Pompeians and Cesareans. The word Christian occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts 26. 28, 1 Peter 4. 16.

28. A great famine over all the world . . . in the days of Claudius. Josephus refers thrice to a great famine in Judea at this time (44 A. D.), and describes the generosity of Izates, King of Adiabene, and his mother, Helena, who were Jewish proselytes (*Antiq.* iii, 15. 3; xx, 2. 5; xx, 5. 2). Four other famines in the reign of Claudius are recorded by early historians.

29. To send relief unto the brethren. This was in perfect harmony with Paul's later practice of taking collections for "the poor among the saints" at Jerusalem (Gal. 2. 10; Rom. 15. 26; 1 Cor. 16. 1; 2 Cor. 9. 1). **To the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.** Elders or presbyters are here first mentioned in the history of the Christian Church. It was probably owing to the persecutions described in the next chapter that the apostles generally were obliged to withdraw from Jerusalem, and these church officers came into especial prominence as next to the apostles in authority. If, as seems probable, Saul met none of the apostles during this visit, we can readily understand why he omits all mention of it from Gal. 2. 1. He is in that epistle recounting those visits only in which he came into personal relations with those "who were apostles before him."

The Lesson Council.

Question 5. *What was the general government of the early Church? Was the church in Antioch under the control of the church in Jerusalem?*

In a word, it was a mixture of the hierarchical with the democratic principle, with an increasing tendency to magnify the hierarchical (Acts 1. 15-26; 6. 2-6; 15. 4-22). All authority originated with the apostles, though they acted as counseling fathers with the churches, not as dictators over them. The weight of evidence indicates that the elders were first chosen by the congregation, then ordained by the apostles (Acts 14. 23), for purposes of instruction and government, and the new Church became a corporation by itself, with derived authority in matters of doctrine and usages, so that the whole Church was one, but in matters of internal administration, local government, and discipline each church exercised a wide freedom, amounting in some cases to independence.

There was no general government, except as the apostles, who were "general superintendents" traveling hither and thither, exercised it. Paul governed the churches he established, and so, no doubt, did other prominent workers. The mother church at Jerusalem, especially while more or less

of the apostles stayed there, would, of course, be the chief fountain of authority as to doctrine, the main depository of the Christian tradition, as is evident from chapter 15; but each church undoubtedly managed its own local affairs.

The first act of the early Church was the appointment of seven men to serve tables. The apostles proposed this innovation, and the whole multitude of the believers ratified it. The latter selected the men and the former inducted them into office by prayer and the laying on of hands. Later, the body of the apostles assumed direction in the evangelistic work done by Philip (one of the seven) in Samaria. The general government of the early Church seemed to be under the concurrent direction of "the apostles and elders with the whole Church." When questions arose among the churches formed from Gentile converts they were referred to the church at Jerusalem, and by them authoritatively settled (Acts 15. 22-24).

The apostles exercised a general superintendency over all the churches—local congregations—and doubtless arranged for ministerial labors. Especially was this true of the churches planted by the apostle Paul. The church at Antioch was a distinct organization, as was the church at Jerusalem, neither exercising authority over the other. Jerusalem was the first in order of organization, Antioch second.

The mission of Barnabas was an expression of supervisory interest and care by the church at Jerusalem for the Antioch mission. The errand of this wise and good minister was to restrain and direct revival enthusiasm and by Gentile exclusion conserve orthodoxy. The impulse of the Holy Spirit led him in a better way. Originally the apostles were a spiritual directory in the "Christian theocracy"—exercising a general superintendency throughout the connection—inspiring, directing, administering charities, appointing deacons, ordaining elders, opening missions, and organizing churches. There is no evidence that Jerusalem dominated Antioch, yet was this commission under advice of the resident bishop a pious expression of anxious concern for the work of God.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Spirit of an Ideal Church.

I. THE SPIRIT OF PATIENCE.

- Scattered... upon the persecution.* v. 19.
 "In the world... tribulation." John 16. 33.
 "We glory in tribulations." Rom. 5. 3.

II. THE SPIRIT OF TESTIMONY.

- Traveled... preaching the word.* v. 19.
 "In season, out of season." 2 Tim. 4. 2.
 "To every creature." Mark 16. 15.

III. THE SPIRIT OF LIBERILITY.

- Unto the Greeks also.* v. 20. (Rev. Ver.)
 "God of the Jews only." Rom. 3. 29.
 "There is no difference." Rom. 10. 12, 13.

IV. THE SPIRIT OF ORGANIZATION.

- Church... set forth Barnabas.* v. 22.
 "Walk by the same rule." Phil. 3. 16.
 "There is one body." Eph. 4. 4.

V. THE SPIRIT OF INSTRUCTION.

- Assembled... and taught.* v. 26.
 "To virtue, knowledge." 2 Pet. 1. 5.
 "Abound... in knowledge." Phil. 1. 9.

VI. THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.

- Came prophets... by the Spirit.* v. 27, 28.
 "Holy men... spake." 2 Pet. 1. 21.
 "Secondarily prophets." 1 Cor. 12. 28.

VII. THE SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY.

- Determined to send relief.* v. 29, 30.
 "Do good... household." Gal. 6. 10.
 "Not grudgingly." 2 Cor. 9. 7.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Model Christian Church.

1. It was a Church established by men who had not only held the truth, and preached it, but had suffered for it. (Verse 19.)
2. It was a Church of composite elements, rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles, all made one in Christ Jesus. (Verses 20, 29.)
3. It was a Church of broad views, not limiting the Gospel to one race, but ready to extend it to all. (Verses 20, 21.)
4. It was a Church of rapid growth, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. (Verses 21, 26.)
5. It was a Church which showed the manifest tokens of the Spirit's presence, and a living Christian experience. (Verse 23.)
6. It was a Church of power in the community, attracting notice and gaining a name. (Verse 25.)
7. It was a Church recognizing the unity of the Gospel and the fellowship of all Christ's people. (Verses 27, 28.)
8. It was a Church of generous giving, aiding the needy, even though far distant. (Verses 28, 29.)
9. It was a Church which first established a mission for the salvation of men. (Chap. 13. 1, 2.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

What is the matter now at Jerusalem? Always something there to disturb men's thinking. It is now the Church of God that is excited. One would think that some of them had felt the jar of a downfall dangerously near them. It is a downfall that agitates them. Away up in Antioch there has been a collapse, and the shock is felt at Jerusalem. In Antioch, that strong city of walls, has

run another still higher, sinking its foundations still deeper. It is that old partition between Jew and Gentile, and what power could level it all away? Not long ago fugitives came one day to the city. They were exiles from the Holy Land, having no continuing city but heaven. They began to preach about its King, Jesus. They championed his name in the sneering synagogue. I see these heralds of the King going out to make their proclamation. I see them stopping people in the market place, or in private houses, or in the bustling street. It might not always be a Jew, but the Lord gave them access to the Gentiles. Glorious was the result! That old partition wall came tumbling down and praises to Jesus went up. Tidings of all this have come to Jerusalem. I think of some meeting of the disciples of Jesus jarred by the sound of that tumbling wall in the north. They begin to discuss the important news from Antioch. Some rejoice. They praise God. O, how they have longed to see this day! Peter made a break in the old separating wall at Caesarea, and they long to see the whole of it coming to the ground. Others shake their heads and mutter about impetuous Peter at Caesarea and his successors in Antioch. It will never do. Somebody says, "Send Barnabas to visit the work in Antioch." There he stands, his face beaming with the light of noble purpose, ever exulting in any opportunities for generous giving or serving.

Barnabas goes to Antioch. I know not his route, whether by the old, dusty, country highway, or by a white-winged ship fleeing over the sea. And now he enters a portal of the great Syrian city, seeks the hospitality of God's people, and then stands among the gatherings for prayer. And lo, it is as at Caesarea, in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile! The wall is down! The fields are open on every side. The grain is ripe. What a harvest is to be ingathered!

Barnabas must have help. He thinks of a man that has fire, force, faith. He resolves to secure him for the work.

He leaves Antioch. I follow him as he hastens, not southward to Jerusalem, but northward, then westward, halting at Tarsus. When he turns about with him is Saul, that coming apostle to the Gentiles.

I watch them hastening, hurrying on, planning as they journey, and afterward beginning to harvest Antioch for Christ. Both Jew and Gentile are in their grain sheaves. There is no fence traversing and dividing this harvest of souls. It is all for Christ, and here at Antioch they first take his name. A whole year these two harvesters are sickling the grain.

But who is it that stands one day in the Antioch gatherings? It is Agabus. Hark! The Spirit of the Lord is upon him. He looks afar. He sees thin, gaunt arms held out for bread. He listens.

He hears piteous outcries for food. It is coming—hunger, famine, death!

But what a glorious scene it is at Antioch, Jew and Gentile giving of their plenty to Judea's poor! I see Barnabas and Saul bearing to Jerusalem the gift. O, what an attestation was that beneficence to the blessedness of a harvest field broken by no walls and giving of its generous resources to the poor brethren in Jesus!

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 19. Persecution scattered the disciples, and so propagated the Gospel. "Truth is like steam—the more it is compressed the greater is the force of expansion." The Jews killed Christ, but the crucifixion and resurrection increased his followers to thousands within a few days. Paul was sent to Rome to the most implacable government to be silenced, but there, where the commerce of the world could reach all surrounding nations, and so spread the tidings, Paul preached Jesus. John Bunyan's preaching was silenced when he was put in Bedford jail, but there he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*, which has done more to bring in the kingdom of Christ than any other book written, except the Bible.

It is said that the itinerancy "must go." To be sure it must go—"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Men of Cyprus...spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. It is to me a marvel of marvels that the Christian's tongue should be more fluent upon any other topic than the theme of the progress of Christ's kingdom upon earth.—*Frances R. Havergal.*

Too many Christians are like the rivers which flow into the Arctic Ocean—frozen at the mouth.—*Dr. J. T. Beckley.*

If religion is a good thing, tell of it! We can learn a lesson from the world of business. The business man meets us at every turn. He appeals to us when we open our morning papers; he talks to us from the panels of the street car; he flashes his story from the stereopticon in the city square when night has come. He invades nature's solitudes and appropriates bowlders and barn doors for his purpose. He is constantly amazing you by some novel method. Here are some valuable hints for him who would tell others of Christ. Not that we are to degrade the story of the cross by fantastic devices; but in all proper ways ought we not to call the attention of the multitudes to the waiting treasures of a Christian life?—*Rev. F. E. Clark, D.D.*

Verses 24. You will never have personal influence to win others to Jesus Christ if you go to your meeting on Tuesday night, and then to a card-party or dance or the theater the next night. I

have been in evangelistic work sixteen years, and have seen one hundred thousand people publicly avow their faith in Christ, but I have never yet met a person who was not a Christian who, brought under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, wanted anyone, even his most intimate friend, that was engaged in these worldly pastimes and pleasures to point out to him the way of salvation. Such persons have no confidence in the religious professions of the man or woman who is given over to worldliness.

Verses 28-30. The art of beneficence, thank God, is not one of the lost arts, but the finest of the fine arts, for God himself is the artist.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw a rough map of the eastern end of the Mediterranean, including Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Tarsus, etc., and show the extent of the Christianity of the period. Show the difference between "Grecians" and "Greeks." . . . The facts of the lesson . . . The persons of the lesson, and traits displayed by each: (1) "They which were scattered;" (2) Barnabas; (3) Saul; (4) Agabus. . . . The spirit of the early Christianity. . . . The church at Antioch: its traits and lessons from it. . . . The name "Christian": (1) Its history; (2) Its meaning. . . . What kind of people does this lesson suggest that we should be? . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. The names of the workers have perished, but their work remains. So with many of the remarkable things in this world; the pyramids, the great cathedrals. We enjoy the shade of trees which others have planted. . . . Alexander the Great once said to a soldier who bore his name, yet was known as a worthless coward, "Either change your name or mend your manners." So we should be worthy of the name "Christian" which we bear.

References.

FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Vers. 22-26: Poetical, \$151. Ver. 23: Prose, 5000, 4822, 4826, 11303, 11804, 792, 358. Ver. 26: Prose, \$187, 8824, 7256, 7295, 7297, 7290, 823, 787.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Power of Love.*

[Make a tree on the board with "Love" at the root, and a few spreading branches. Ask the children to think of this as the picture of a Christian. Tell that this is what God says he is like. Turn to the first Psalm and read, "And he shall be like a tree." Get from children that we expect every living tree to have roots, branches, leaves, seeds, fruit. Tell that as the roots of a tree are out of sight, and appear in the branches and leaves

and fruit of the tree, so love is hidden away in the heart of a Christian, and appears in the words and acts of the everyday life.]

Christians in Trouble. Do you remember Stephen, and why he was killed? Who was the young man who stood by and was glad to see Stephen killed? Saul went on, helping all he could to get rid of all the Christians in Jerusalem. What would you do if wicked men were trying to catch you and do you harm? Would you run away? Yes, I think you would. That is what the Christians of Jerusalem did. They left their homes and went to other cities and towns to live to save their lives. Some went to a very rich and beautiful, but wicked, city, called Antioch. The people there did not know God; they were Gentiles, or heathens.

Christians at Work. Did you ever see a tree blowing hard in the wind? These Christian trees were being blown now by the wind of persecution. But this did not stop the growing and scattering of the seeds. Wherever the disciples went they preached the Gospel. In Antioch, three hundred miles away from Jerusalem, the seed of heavenly truth was carried, and many people gave up the worship of idols, and began to worship the true God.

The seed which was planted in Antioch was the word of God [show a Bible], and this seed is so full of life that it must grow. It was here that disciples were first called Christians. It was given to them as a nickname by their enemies, but now the name is an honored one, known in nearly all parts of the world.

Christians Growing. What makes a tree grow? It must have air, light, heat, and moisture. Then its roots must be set in a good place.

These young Gospel trees that had begun to grow in the heathen city were rooted in the love and favor of God. The Holy Spirit was sent to give them light, and to keep their hearts fresh and warm. The Church grew so fast that the news went back to Jerusalem, and good Barnabas was sent to see if Gentiles could become true disciples. [Recall the lesson of the open door, and tell that the church at Jerusalem had now to learn that God loves every body—Gentiles and Jews alike.]

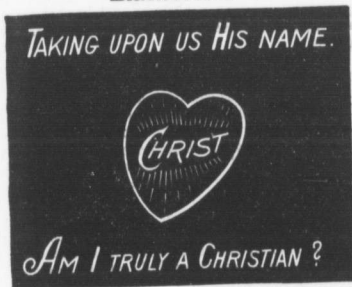


Christians Giving. What is the best thing a tree can give us? "Fruit," some one says. Yes; good, sweet fruit. [Tell of the time of want among the Christians in Judea, and how these men converts sent generous gifts to them.] The beautiful fruit of love that we call generosity is one that all true Christians can bear if they will. Even little children, who are little trees of the Lord, can give kind words and

loving deeds, and God will see it and know that it is the sweet fruit of his little tree, whose root is love.

Sing, "Give, said the little stream."

Blackboard.



The lesson of to-day tells how the Gospel was preached at Antioch. In verse 26 we are told that it was there the disciples were first called Christians. Let the one who reviews the lesson take up the several points that may be developed in the study of the early Church taking upon them that name. Here are a few points: 1. All took it, Jew and Gentile. 2. It was in honor of Christ. 3. It was like an oath of allegiance to him. 4. It acknowledged him all the time; we are his followers.

APPLICATION.—Am I truly a Christian? Is his name written in my heart as it is here? [Point to the board.] Do I honor or dishonor his name? Shall I not honor him whose name I have taken upon me?

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

More love to thee, O Christ.
All the way my Saviour leads me.
He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
We've listed in a holy war.
Work, for the night is coming.

No. 2.

Come, every soul by sin oppressed.
Jesus Christ is passing by.
Once for all the Saviour died.
Like a prodigal of old.
Learning of Jesus the lessons of truth.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What was done by the believers who were scattered abroad in the persecutions after Stephen's death? **They went everywhere preaching.**

2. To whom did they at first preach? **To the Jews only.**

3. Where was the first church planted among the Gentiles? **At Antioch, in Syria.**

4. What name was first given to believers in Christ at Antioch? **The name Christians.**

5. What did this church do in the time of a famine in Judea? **They sent relief to the churches.**

CATECHISM QUESTION. Oct 30

42. Where is He said to sanctify the heart and life? **The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.—Galatians v. 22, 23.**

Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.

— As unskillful hunters shooting at wild beasts may kill a man, so those that shoot at the saints hit Christ.—*Grapp.*

— As to thy last apostle's heart
Thy lightning glance did then impart
Zeal's never-dying fire,
So teach us on thy shrine to lay
Our hearts, and let them day by day
Intenser blaze and higher.

—*Kable.*

— Trample not on any; there may be some work of grace there that thou knowest not of; the name of God may be written upon that soul thou treadest on.—*Leighton.*

— The mantle of the first of the martyrs fell upon the last of the apostles.—*Ford.*

— Sometimes there is, as it were, a window opened in heaven, and Christ shows himself through the lattice; they have sometimes a beam of sweet light breaking forth from above into the soul; and God and the Redeemer sometimes come to them, and make friendly visits to them, and manifest themselves to them.—*Edwards.*

— To believe is the secret act of the soul, to turn to the Lord is the visible course of a disciple's life.—*Arnol.*

— The Lord does not want splendid workers so much as he wants simple and loving souls that are altogether given up to him. It is the song of the little children that he would not suffer to be silenced; and it was the mite of the poor widow that he commended more than all the golden gifts of the rich. Our Master has a wonderful eye for the service of the little and the lowly.—*Pearse.*

ment, it is always with the feeling and conviction that it is the inspired Word of God. The book is well introduced by Dr. Warfield, and cannot fail to be of great service to the thoughtful student of the New Testament. The author contrasts the immeasurable superiority of the books with the puerile and non-sensical character of the apocryphal gospels. As to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he deals with it very frankly and candidly and sums up that the balance is very evidently in favor of its Pauline origin. The whole work is a fine specimen of a reverent and conservative Biblical criticism, and, as such, we cordially commend it to Sunday-school teachers and Sunday-school superintendents and Biblical students generally.

Nathanael Noble's Homely Talks for Years and Youth. By the REV. HENRY SMITH. Illustrated by CHARLES TRESIDDER. London: Charles Kelly. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a book of homely wisdom and piety by an old-fashioned Methodist local preacher, the representative of a class now becoming more and more rare. The development of education, while it may, perhaps, improve the provincialisms and piquant peculiarities of the speakers, perhaps, also lessens the freshness and vigour with which their sermons come home to the business and bosoms of their rustic congregations. Methodism owes much to the pious zeal and shrewd sense of its Nathanael Nobles and others of the class whom he represents. The fresh, breezy, and out-of-doorish character of some of his short sermons, or parables they might almost be called, will be seen from their titles. "The Orchard Homily," "Rainbow Promises," "Spring's Message of Hope," "Roots and Fruits," "Summers Bounty," "Harvest Home," "Thrashing and Sifting," "Sheep and Their Ways," and "Dew Lessons." Others are social in their character, as "The Dorcas Homily," "For Sewing Meetings," "Prayer Meeting Homily," "Fireside Talks," "Watch-night Homily," "The Wedding Breakfast," and the like. A word must be said of the admirable illustrations of the accomplished artist, Mr. Tresidder. He seems to have caught the very spirit of the rustic homilist and his themes. We are sorry to see, however, in his wedding breakfast party, some of the guests using wine, although the remarks of the village preacher do not suggest its presence. A good book for Sunday-school libraries.

The Teacher Taught.

THE teacher is to teach. Of course; but to teach he must learn, and while he serves his class that class may in turn be of service to him.

What can it teach him? Many things, and among others:

How to study the Bible. The questions the scholars ask suggest the things which are to be studied. He has an end in view and a powerful motive which spurs him on. The gold of truth which he digs out with industry week by week he is not to hoard like a miser, but to scatter in his class with a generous impulse. He has the joy of knowing that while he enriches others he makes not himself poor, for while he gives he gains.

He is taught the value of apt expression. To gain Bible knowledge is but half the work, but to communicate is the other and equally delightful half. Let him therefore study the force of words and sentences, and ask in solitude the question, "How can I best express this thought so that the mind of my class can grasp it with ease?" Let him seek clearness, and then brevity.

He learns the value of well-chosen and apt illustrations. He finds that it is not enough to be understood, but that he fails as a teacher unless what he says takes hold of the memory. He finds that while illustrations from books are of worth, yet those drawn from his own observation and which concern every-day life are of far greater worth. So he hunts after comparisons and forms the habit of using the word "like" in his teaching.

Above all he will learn that truth, to be effective, must be taught by one who is in living sympathy with it. Back of a pious utterance must glow a pious character. What a teacher says has greatly added power by what he is. To speak of the power and beauty of religion avails but little unless he reveals these by his own life, and, therefore, his daily prayer ought to be, "Not only for mine own sake, O God, but for the sake of the members of my class help me to be ever true and earnest."—*S. S. Journal.*

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I PROMISE thee, sweet Lord,
That I will never cloud the light
Which shines from thee within my soul,
And makes my reason bright;
Not ever will I lose the power
To serve thee by thy will.
Which thou hast set within my heart,
Thy precepts to fulfil.

Oh, let me drink as Adam drank,
Before from thee he fell;
Oh, let me drink as thou, dear Lord,
When faint by Sychar's well;
That from my childhood, pure from sin,
Of drink and drunken strife,
By the clear fountains I may rest,
Of everlasting life.

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