

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 26.]

AUGUST, 1892.

[No. 8.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Temple of Jupiter, Baalbes	i
The Model Teacher	ii
Why Not?	ii
Sing Unto the Lord	iii
Opening and Closing Services	iii
International Bible Lessons	404

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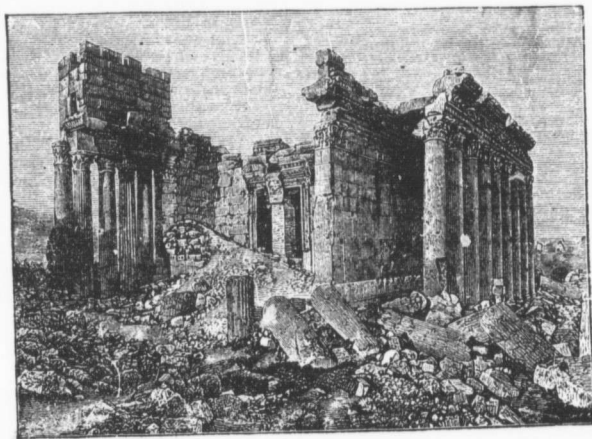
SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

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VOL. XXVI.]

AUGUST, 1892.

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TEMPLE OF JUPITER, BAALBEC.

Temple of Jupiter, Baalbec.

BY THE REV. GEO. J. BOND, B.A.

THE Temple of Jupiter at Baalbec, is the finest and most perfect and elaborate in Syria, and larger than the Pantheon at Athens. It was of the same general style as the Great Temple—a cella and peristyle—and its dimensions are two hundred and twenty-seven feet by one hundred and fifteen. In the peristyle, were originally forty-two columns, fifteen on each side, and eight at each end, and these columns were sixty-five feet high including base and capital, six feet three inches in diameter at the base and five feet eight inches at the top.

The cella of this superb building is still entire, but most of the columns have fallen. Enough remains entire and *in situ*, however, to give a very vivid idea of its original beauty. The wealth of delicate sculpture in the ceiling which connected the peristyle with the cella, particularly in the capitals, and the elaborate ornamentation of the magnificent portal, is perfectly amazing. This portal is twenty-one feet wide and forty-two feet high, and the jambs, which are monoliths, are sculptured most delicately with a band four feet wide, representing fruit, flowers, and vine leaves. The lintel is in three parts, and the massive key-stone, during an earthquake in the last century, slipped from its position, and is now upheld by a pile of rough masonry.

The interior matches the exterior of the building, in the profusion and richness of its carving, and in the elaborateness and grace of its detail; and, indeed, every fresh turn in and about these marvellous precincts gave one some fresh evidence of the taste, the time and the wealth that had been lavished in erecting and beautifying these stupendous fanes of an effete superstition and a decaying national life.

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Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, AUGUST, 1892.

The Model Teacher.

LET me sketch the model teacher. He should have good health. I do not mean to say must have, but if he has not good health he should be able to enjoy poor health. A sour, morose person, one who is cross because he has dyspepsia, or who has dyspepsia because he is cross, cannot be so sweet, gentle and genial through the Sunday-school hour that the children will not detect that it is not his usual humor.

He is always neat, tidy and as attractive as possible. I have known children to be impressed by so seemingly small a thing as well-kept finger nails. He is very cordial to the children. If he really wants them to come to the school (and he certainly should), he lets them know it. Makes them feel that he misses them if they are absent, and they miss something by staying away. I heard of a child who was very anxious to go to Sunday-school one rainy day. "But, my child," said her mother,

"you cannot go to-day; see how hard it is raining. You will be drenched and catch a dreadful cold." "But, mamma, I must go. My teacher will be there and expect me. She will feel so bad if I am away, she will cry. Why, I must go."

Very few children will continue coming to the class ignorant of the lesson if they expect the teacher will be there and be ready to teach them.

He shakes hands with the children on entering the class. If he knows of any of their home people who are sick he inquires about them and lets the children know he is interested in them.

This pattern teacher knows what he is going to teach and knows how to apply it to the children. The same thing will not do for all children. Different capabilities, different home training, different temperaments and many other things must be taken into consideration. There is a vast deal more in every lesson than can be taught, and enough for each pupil to have just what he needs.

He gets all possible light on the subject and prepares himself to answer all the questions he thinks the children may ask about it.

This teacher is a thorough Christian. He prays earnestly for guidance in teaching and that the children may be brought into the marvellous light. He thinks, "I must impress the truth upon the minds of the children. I am sure if the truth does not save them they will never be saved, and it may be if my application of the truth does not save them they will never be saved." In short, his one aim is to set a good example before the children, and to do nothing that he would not be willing for them to do also. He teaches them punctuality by being punctual himself. He teaches them reverence by being reverent, and teaches them love for the Bible and for the school by loving them himself.—*Michigan Advocate.*

Why Not?

WHY not expect to win your class for Jesus? You say that the parents are indifferent or openly unchristian; that the church is a worldly one; that little effort is put forth in your school for the conversion of the children; and that you cannot hope in one little hour to counteract the worldly influences brought to bear upon the young minds and hearts all through the week. But "All things are possible to him that believeth." "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

It is yours to bind those young hearts so firmly to the throne of God that the strong cord can never be broken. How? By your living faith! Expect them to become the followers of the risen Christ, and let them know that you expect it. You cannot simulate such an expectation. If you do not have it, get it in your closet or in some other place of prayer, where

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only it can be found! And, having received it, then work rationally and faithfully toward that end.

When we expect to accomplish a given work, as building a house, for instance, we set about it in a definite and confident way, working steadily toward the end in view. Expenditure of time, thought, and money, careful supervision, unflagging interest, and well-directed effort, all these are a matter of course. Shall we do less when we seek to help in fashioning temples that shall stand forever?

Sing Unto the Lord.

LLEWELLYN A. MORRISON.

"I will sing of Thy mercies in the morning."

THOU God of Creation!
Omnipotent King!
With glad adoration
Thy glory we sing;
We sing of salvation
The gift of Thy grace—
Thy perfect oblation
For Adam's lost race.

At morning we praise Thee,
To Thee doth belong
The glory we raise Thee
In anthem and song.
The night beareth to us
The strength for the days;
Thy mercies renew us
To walk in Thy ways.

Through love we inherit
The shield of Thy might;
Thy word and Thy Spirit
Are guiding and light—
Our comfort in sorrow—
Our buckler in strife—
Our hope for each morrow
And promise of life.

Our souls in Thy keeping
Are safe, in Thy hand—
O waking, or sleeping,
On sea or on land—
No harm can betide us,
At last, on Thy breast,
We safely shall hide us
In permanent rest.

A CONGREGATION OF ONE.—When Judson carried the message of salvation to the villages and jungles of India, he declared his conviction that men must be redeemed to God by personal, individual contact with those who knew the grace of Christ, and he said, "I am determined to preach the gospel wherever I can find a congregation of one."

Opening and Closing Services.

THIRD QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. Silence.
II. Responsive Sentences.
Supt. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion:
and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

School. I will pay my vows unto the Lord
now in the presence of all his people.

Supt. The Lord is nigh unto all them that
call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

School. Because he hath inclined his ear unto
me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I
live.

Supt. Glory ye in his holy name: let the
heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

All. Let the words of my mouth, and the
meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy
sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

- III. Singing.
IV. The Apostles' Creed, or Ten Command-
ments.
V. Prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer in
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, Out-
line, 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. Sentence.
Supt. We ought to give the more earnest
heed to the things which he have heard, lest at
any time we should let them slip; for how shall
we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.
III. Dismissal.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER.

A. D. 30.] LESSON VI. THE APOSTLES' CONFIDENCE IN GOD. [Aug. 7.]

GOLDEN TEXT. They spake the word of God with boldness. Acts 4. 31.

Authorized Version.

Acts 4. 19-31. [*Commit to memory verses 29-31.*]

19 But Pe'ter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant Da'vid hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Je'sus, whom thou hast anointed, both Her'od, and Pon'tius Pilate, with the Gen'tiles, and the people of Is'ra-el, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Je'sus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

TIME.—A. D. 30, on the same day with the events of the last lesson. **PLACE.**—Jerusalem. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The decrees of God.

HOME READINGS.

M. The apostles' confidence in God.

Acts 4. 19-31.

Tv. Exhortation to boldness. Matt. 10. 28-39.

W. A strong helper. Psa. 124.

Revised Version.

19 But Pe'ter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought.

23 And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father Da'vid thy servant, didst say,

Why did the Gentiles rage,
And the peoples imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth set themselves in array,

And the rulers were gathered together,
Against the Lord, and against his Anointed:

27 For of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Je'sus, whom thou didst anoint, both Her'od and Pon'tius Pilate, with the Gen'tiles and the peoples of Is'ra-el, were gathered to-

28 gether, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass. And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with

30 all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Je'sus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Th. Glorifying in persecution. Phil. 1. 12-21.

F. Suffering with Christ. 1 Pet. 4. 12-19.

S. Without fear. Psa. 27. 1-8.

S. More than conquerors. Rom. 8. 28-39.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 195, New Canadian Hymnal.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus

No. 188, New Canadian Hymnal.

Am I a soldier of the cross.

No. 193, New Canadian Hymnal.

Onward, Christian soldiers.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 107, 103, 105.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Threatenings, v. 19-22.

To what decision did the Jewish council come?
What question of duty did the apostles recognize?

What principle governed them? (Acts 5, 29.)
What warning had Jesus given them? (Matt. 10, 28.)

What was the great work to which God had called them?

What restrained the council from injuring the apostles?

2. Praises, v. 23-28.

When "let go" what company did the apostles seek?

Why did they seek such company?
What report did they make, and to whom?

How were the tidings received?

What is "fraternal sympathy"?

How does this conduct show it?

What was their refuge in their peril?

Against whom did they realize this enmity to be directed?

What was the burden of their prayer?

What is meant by lifted up their voice to God? (Ver. 24.)

What caused them to do this?

Name some other case where they prayed in this way.

3. Boldness, v. 29-31.

For what special grace did they ask? (Ver. 29.)

What special reason to ask for miraculous aid?

What three results followed their prayer?

Why may we call these "blessings"?

Why call them "abundant"?

Why should this encourage us to pray together?

What is the GOLDEN TEXT?

Practical Teachings.

1. How far should rulers be obeyed?
2. What is true wisdom in questions of divided duty?
3. What may we expect when we call upon God for help and direction?
4. Shall we ask for deliverance from trial, or help in trial? What lessons may we learn about—
1. Our company? 2. Our prayers? 3. Our gifts? 4. Our work?

Hints for Home Study.

Find other instances of Peter's boldness in testifying for Christ after the pentecostal blessing.

Find and read the psalm quoted in this prayer.

Write down any reasons that come to your mind for believing that the apostles at this time peculiarly needed supernatural sights and sounds to buttress their faith and to impress others with the truth of their testimony.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Threatenings, v. 19-22.

What did the apostles ask the council to decide?

What did they say was their own decision?

What did the council do with them?

Why were they set at liberty?

How did the people regard the miracle?

What was the age of the healed man?

2. Praises, v. 23-28.

Where did the apostles go when released?

What report did they make?

How was the report received?

To whom did the company offer praise?

From what Old Testament book did they quote?

What words did they quote?

To what rulers and people were the words applied?

Against whom was their conspiracy?

3. Boldness, v. 29-31.

For what did the apostles pray?

What did they ask the Lord to do?

How was the name of Jesus to be honored?

What followed their prayer?

What happened to the disciples?

What did they do? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. To obey God rather than men!
2. To seek God's help in trial!
3. That God answers prayer!

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Try to find in another chapter of Acts another story of an apostle healing a cripple.

Find and read the story of the first prayer-meeting of the disciples after our Lord's resurrection.

When was the Holy Spirit first given to Gentiles?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did the rulers forbid Peter and John to do?

To teach about Jesus.

What did Peter say? **That they must obey God.**

What is a good man's first question? **"Is it right?"**

What did the rulers do? **They threatened the apostles.**

Why did they not punish them? **They feared the people.**

Who were praising God for what had been done? **The people.**

What made the miracle seem greater? **The man healed was forty years old.**

Where did Peter and John go when they were free? **To their friends.**

For what did they all praise God? **For saving them.**

Who wanted to destroy them? **Their enemies.**

Who has power over all kings and rulers? **The great God.**

What had the rulers tried to do? **To destroy God's Son.**

Why did the apostles ask God to make them bold? **So that they might speak the truth.**

What did they ask to have done in Jesus' name? **Signs and wonders.**

What came upon them while they prayed? **The Holy Ghost.**

What will give us strength to work for God? **The gift of the Spirit.**

Words with Little People.

A Christian child needs Courage to speak the truth about Jesus; Love, to bear with those who are Jesus's enemies; and Strength, to do right, no matter how many do wrong.

God gives Courage, Love, Strength when he gives the Holy Spirit.

Whisper Prayer.

"Teach me thy way."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

General Statement.

Our last lesson brought Peter and John from the prison where they had spent the night into the threatening circle of the Sanhedrin, the highest national court of the Jews. After Peter had been permitted to defend his colleague and himself they were both sent out of the room, and the Sanhedrin consulted as to what should be done. It was not an easy problem to solve. To punish men for so beneficent an act ~~was a hard~~ besides, the Christians were at the present juncture strongly supported by public favor. On the other hand, the rulers could not let them go unsentenced without at the same time letting go much of their own prestige; so they took a middle course and tried to silence them with threatenings. As soon as the apostles were liberated they returned to the little company of Christians and together sang and prayed. An unusual manifestation of the Holy Spirit was the immediate evidence of the answer to their prayers. The shaking of the foundations of the building well symbolized the lordship of Jesus over the powers of nature.

Verse 19. The scene here described occurred in the month of June, A. D. 30, in the hall of the Sanhedrin, near Mount Moriah, but outside of the temple inclosure. The Sanhedrin was composed of seventy members and the nazi, or president, making seventy-one members in all. It seems to have included all the high-priests, past and present, the chiefs of the twenty-four priestly courses, and representative men from the elders or rulers of the synagogues and from the scribes. Often, but not always, the high-priest was the nazi. The council sat in a semicircle with the president and the vice-president, who sat at his right hand, in the middle of the curve. In cases of trial the accused persons stood directly opposite these officers, in what would have been the center of the circle had the circle been complete. "The jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin," in the words of Dr. Gloag, "extended to all manner of questions, both political and religious. The accused were heard in defense, witnesses were examined, and sentences from which there was no appeal were pronounced." But the Romans had deprived this court of the power over life and death. **Right in the sight of God.** (1) *God's view is the true standard of man's duty.* **More than unto.** The Revised Version, "rather

er than unto," is better. "Two commands come into collision," and God's voice must be obeyed and man's ignored. Read Amos 7. So when Socrates was about to be condemned to death for teaching his townsmen lofty morals, he said, "I will obey God rather than Athenians; I will die a thousand times rather than cease to teach you your duty." **Judge ye.** The common sense of humanity is usually right. Men's hearts go wrong and their acts are craven; but often the worst men admire goodness—in others. (2) *Conscience must never be guided by expediency.*

20 Cannot but speak. (3) *No man has any authority over another's religious opinions.* **Things which we have seen and heard.** This was not a question of opinion. They had knowledge on the verity and publicity of which depended the salvation of the world, and they must speak. The apostles' attitude was as wise as it was bold, for the Sanhedrin shrank from extreme measures.

21. Finding nothing . . . because of the people. Popular opinion served at this time as a defense of the disciples. Very likely, also, the rivalry between the Sadducees and the Pharisees was of advantage to them. It is probable that

both Joseph and Nicodemus were members of the Sanhedrin, and Gamaliel, though not a Christian, was indisposed to severity. **All men glorified God.** There was no doubt of the power which had healed the crippled man. (4) *Public opinion has a restraining influence on bad men.* (5) *No course is safe but the course of duty.* (6) *To-day none of us are called to die for Jesus, but we are called to tell the story of his saving love.*

22. Above forty years old. And therefore, as an hereditary cripple, beyond all medical skill. **Miracle.** Sign of wonder: **Showed.** Performed.

23. Being let go, they went to their own. Men always do. The only reason that we are not all of us to-day in the midst of the fulfillment of our strongest hopes is that we are not yet "let go." So soon as the fetters of custom and environment are removed from us we instinctively go to our own. This deep-seated principle in human nature explains many things: the sudden fall of Christians who had heretofore preserved a blameless character; the preference of Jesus for the woman who was a sinner rather than the polite and immoral Pharisee; the mysteries of heaven and hell—all are indicated, if not defined, by this wonderful text. "Being let go," men go "to their own." Often we are compelled to go and stay where we do not like to be, but whenever there is free choice "our company tests our character."

24. They lifted up their voice to God. They did not despond, but turned to the Strong for strength. (7) *"To the threats of its enemies the Church always opposes prayer to God."*—Gloag. Probably one uttered the prayer and the rest heartily responded to it. In place of **Lord, thou art God**, read *O Lord, thou dost make*, etc. It is an appeal to the Creator.

25. Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said. This has been regarded by many as an evidence that David wrote the second Psalm. Whether or not this can be regarded as certain, the phrase certainly attests the inspiration

of the psalm, and the fact that David is the representative writer of Hebrew psalmody. **Imagine.** Image, devise, plot. **Vain things.** The attempt to crush out Christianity was indeed vain, and yet it seemed at this very hour to be certainly successful.

26. Kings . . . rulers. The two Herods represent the first class; Pilate and Caiaphas the second. **Stood up.** Took their stand.

27. Holy child. Servant. **Thou hast anointed.** To get the full meaning of this phrase, remember: 1. In the East "anointed" had a conventional meaning like that attached to our word "crowned," and referred rather to the dignity for which the ceremony stood than to the ceremony itself. 2. That in the psalm here quoted, which was our lesson for April 10, while the "anointed" refers primarily to a king of Israel—either David or Solomon—it was also plainly intended by God to have a prophetic and symbolic application. 3. That Jesus was "anointed" in being selected by God to be the Messiah, and at his baptism, by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his human soul, he was consecrated to his threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King (John 1. 32).

28. Thy counsel determined before. God did not determine that any of his creatures should commit sin, but he did determine that all his sinful creatures should be turned into instruments to conveniently work out his will.

29. Signs and wonders. The power of working miracles was evidently valued by the infant Church as a summons to the multitude which always won attention. **Holy child** should be "servant." **Name** stands for power. (8) *The Christian seeks not exemption from trial, but help under it.*

31. Were all filled with the Holy Ghost. All present received consciously an increase of moral and spiritual power. **Spake the word of God with boldness.** The natural result of a rich divine blessing.

CRITICAL NOTES.

BY PROFESSOR CHARLES F. BRADLEY, D.D.

Verse 19. Unto you rather than unto God. See 5. 29. Jesus taught the duty of respect to political and religious authority. He said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's;" and "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." But he taught, as the supreme duty, obedience to the will of God. When there is a direct issue between human and divine authority the Christian's duty is perfectly clear. Socrates used similar noble words when on trial for his life: "Athenians, I shall obey the God rather than you, . . . but understand that I shall

never act differently, even if I have to die for it many times." On the occasion described in this lesson the apostles came, for the first time, into opposition to the civil and religious authorities of their nation. Peter and John, after performing a notable miracle, had publicly preached in Solomon's Porch that Jesus was the Messiah foretold by Moses and all the prophets, and that, though crucified by the Jewish people and rulers, he had been raised from the dead. At their trial before this most august tribunal Peter repeats the substance of this sermon, but with no apparent effect upon the council as a whole. There is no indica-

tion that they examined the evidences for the resurrection, nor the proofs that in Jesus the ancient prophecies were fulfilled. They could not deny the miracle which had been wrought, but they would do their best to stop the spread of the Gospel by threatening the disciples and forbidding them to preach. In this crisis Peter and John, with a calm defiance which must have been most exasperating to the haughty Sanhedrin, refuse to obey them instead of God.

21. Finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people. The most obvious reason for the powerlessness of the council was the public joy over this great miracle. But there were, no doubt, other influences working in their favor. Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 15. 43) and Nicodemus (John 3. 1) were not improbably members of the council. Gamaliel, the tolerant doctor of the law, very likely now as afterward (5. 34-39), counseled leniency. Above all, it was the Sadducees who were the prime movers of this persecution, because of their opposition to the preaching of the resurrection. The Pharisees no doubt secretly enjoyed the annoyance of their opponents. Now, according to Josephus, the Pharisees were able "greatly to persuade the body of the people," while the Sadducees were "able to do almost nothing of themselves," and when they became magistrates were wont to "addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise hear them." A short time after this, when Stephen preached publicly against the unique sacredness of the temple, the Pharisees too were roused to hostility against the Church, and the first serious persecution began (8. 1). But even then the apostles appear to have enjoyed exceptional favor.

25. By the mouth of our father David. See 1. 16. This passage is one of the few in the New Testament which exhibit a primitive confusion in the text. A word meaning "by" or "and" was probably omitted by an early copyist and a few words were transposed. Nevertheless there is no uncertainty concerning the meaning of the verse. **Why did the Gentiles rage,** etc. Like most of the quotations from the Old Testament in Luke's writings, this is from the Greek translation called the Septuagint. In this particular case the Septuagint is followed word for word. The variations from the Hebrew are unimportant. See Psa. 2. 1-2.

27. In this city. This phrase has been recovered from the oldest and best manuscripts and corresponds with the expression "upon my holy hill of Zion" in the psalm quoted. **Whom thou didst anoint.** See Acts 10. 38; Luke 4. 15, and 3. 21, 22. **The Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.** The Church, in its prayer, notes the correspondences between the prophetic psalm and its fulfillment in the history of Jesus. "The Gentiles" are the Romans; "the peoples" are those

of Israel, "the kings" are represented by Herod (Luke 23. 11), and "the rulers" by Pilate. The "peoples" of Israel may refer to the Jews coming from different foreign countries (2. 5, 9-11), or to the twelve tribes (26. 7). With this prayer compare that of Hezekiah in Isa. 37. 16-20.

31. When they had prayed. The answer of the Church was immediate and direct. Persecution drove the believers to prayer for courage and divine power. The Holy Ghost filled them with boldness (verses 31, 33), power and grace (33), miracles were wrought (5. 10, 12, 15), the Church was united (32) and benevolent (34-37), and many were added to the Church (5. 14; 6. 1).

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. If Herod, Pilate, and the Jews were carrying out God's will in the death of Christ (verses 27, 28) why should they be held guilty for it?

God had ordained the end, but not the means. He appointed that Christ should die for man, but not necessarily that these men should crucify him. That was their own voluntary act, for which they were responsible. There were many ways in which he could have died without their aid. Peter discriminates, in Acts 2. 23, between God's appointment and man's free actions. God controls the results of the bad deeds of bad men. They meant to crush this young religion, but God made their wrath work out his will.—*Rev. George W. Broten, D. D., Glens Falls, N. Y.*

Motives decide the innocence or guilt of every human act. Each actor was more or less guilty because bad motives prompted the part he took therein. The transaction was diabolical from beginning to finish—they carried out God's will, as the brothers of Joseph did, not as men intentionally accomplishing the divine plan, but gratifying personal envy and hate. The instigators of the death of Jesus "had the greater sin" (John 19. 11), for theirs were the baser motives, the initiative and intentional act. Pilate was an unwilling participant, urged thereto by mob clamor and the pressure of influence.—*Rev. Clinton D. Day, Pilger, Neb.*

In the plans of the atonement Christ must be sacrificed by death. But there was no predetermined method of that death. Though it was minutely foretold by the prophets such foreknowledge of God was not foreordination. The Father did not select Herod, Pilate, and the Jews to commit the murder. They all were free agents, and could have chosen not to do the awful deed. But choosing, themselves, to do it, they became guilty, as Peter claims them to be. God delivered the innocent One, those wicked men slew him.—*M. F. B. Knox, D. D., Manchester, N. H.*

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Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Spirit of Believers.

I. A CONSCIENTIOUS SPIRIT.

Whether it be right. v. 19.

"Not as pleasing men, but God." 1 Thess. 2. 4.

"Obey God rather than men." Acts 5. 29.

II. A WITNESSING SPIRIT.

We cannot but speak. v. 20.

"Believed....spoken." Psa. 116. 10.

"Seen and heard declare we." 1 John 1. 3.

III. A BROTHERLY SPIRIT.

Went to their own company. v. 23.

"Fellowship one with another." 1 John 1. 7.

"Being of one accord." Phil. 2. 2.

IV. A PRAYING SPIRIT.

Lifted up....voice to God. v. 24.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Psa. 55. 22.

"Let your requests....known." Phil. 4. 6.

V. A BELIEVING SPIRIT.

To do....thy counsel. v. 23.

"Determinate counsel....of God." Acts 2. 23.

"Wrath of men....praise thee." Psa. 76. 10.

VI. A BOLD SPIRIT.

Spake the word....boldness. v. 31.

"Be strong in the Lord." Eph. 6. 10.

"Fear them not." Matt. 10. 26.

Thoughts for Young People.

God's Help in Trial.

1. *Trust God for a clear conviction of duty, and courage to do it.* It is not probable that God has given you as massive an intellect as he gave to Luther, but he is ready to give you as clear a conscience and as bold a heart. John Bunyan had a livelier imagination than you have; but by God's grace you may say as promptly as did he to his jailers who offered to release him on condition of not preaching, "Set me free to-day, and come to hear me to-morrow." There is no limit but the limit of our prayer and faith to our possible endowment of spiritual grace and power and boldness.

2. *Trust God for your reputation.* If he does not secure to you the moral support of all good men it is because he sees an opportunity for you to do nobler work for him without it.

3. *God gives to most of us the communion of saints.* Blessed privilege! Let us make the most of it.

4. *God gives to all of us his word.* It meets every need of life. We have more of it than had Peter and John. Do we ask divine blessing on its daily study?

5. *God overrules all troubles to the advancement of his cause and to the personal advantage of the Christian sufferer.* Sickness, misunderstandings of

brethren, financial losses, bereavements, opposition of evil men—"all things"—work together for our good. In the first place, they are factors which help to bring on the Gospel's triumph; in the second place, they will be surely outbalanced by and by a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

6. *The Holy Spirit comes to every tried soul who trusts in Christ.* "A very present help in trouble," he is the divine Comforter, Advocate, and Guide, so that we can "do all things" and "endure all things."

7. *God so manifests the tokens of his favor that eventually all about us recognize that we are divinely supported.*

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

What an array of harshness and sternness, scowls and shakes of the head, in those rows of elders, rulers, priests, and scribes! And before them Peter and John are standing, two weak men on whom these millstones purpose to turn and grind and crush them. What confidence, though, is in the face of the disciples! It shines out of their very eyes. It is in their posture—erect and commanding. The Lord is with them.

But the Sanhedrin speaks. Annas, Caiaphas, some one of the council, leans forward, frowns, mutters, and commands that Peter and John shall not speak in the name of Jesus.

What! not speak at all that holy name before the people? What! the Sanhedrin going to muzzle those disciples? As if they could! A muzzle for Peter, a muzzle for John, the idea! Can they be silenced? Yes, the Sanhedrin purposes to attempt it. The council tells them they must never speak again in the dear name of Jesus! Never tell any poor soul in the torment of remorse that Jesus can forgive! Never say to the dying that Jesus lives forever and they too shall have a glorious life in him! Never tell the heart-broken mother that Jesus's hand can wipe away sorrow's tears! Never; no, never!

The muzzle is on!

The rulers look complacently at one another. Their work is a success. Peter and John are muzzled.

What! Peter and John tearing the restrictions away? They are speaking boldly. They are appealing to a higher judgment-bench. They are looking up to a stronger Power. They are taking refuge in God. And speak—they will! Speak—they must! That muzzle each dashes away.

O, how ruler and scribe, elder and priest frown now! How they mutter and scowl and shake the head and threaten and denounce! They try to put the muzzle on again and send the disciples away.

What will Peter and John do? Will they go directly to some place of retirement, in silence, contentedly, humbly wearing the muzzle? They seek their own company. In some house of meeting there are clustered the disciples of Jesus who have been anxiously wondering how it has fared with Peter and John. They are asking themselves if Peter and John will come out alive from those millstones of the council. If alive, how will they look? What will they say?

The door opens, and there stand Peter and John! The muzzle on? No, with open mouth, with bold and ready speech they tell every thing to that waiting throng. They tell the threats, they repeat the commands of the council. What will these other disciples do? Will they wear the muzzle?

Hark! There is the sound of a stirring, a falling upon the knees. They clasp their hands in prayer. They look away from frowning ruler and haughty priest. They make their solemn appeal to the tribunal of Jehovah. They pray for boldness to speak in the name of Jesus.

In his name let signs and wonders be done.

O, solemn appeal!

And hark! What an impressive sound of a trembling, a shaking, a solemn moving! It is God, the Holy Ghost coming down in majestic attestation of his presence. Ecstatic tongues are given them. The mighty word is proclaimed. Truth is vindicated and Jesus honored.

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

"Whether it be right in the sight of God," Peter and John boldly raise the question of right. This is a mighty word, which when it gets possession of a man's conscience leaves him no alternative. He must obey God though the heavens fall. Neither rulers nor kings have any power over a man's actions when he has surrendered his conscience to the right. The Hebrew children would not worship the image which the king set up, though the alternative was the fiery furnace, because such an action would violate the right. Daniel would not cease praying to his God, though the lions' den was waiting to receive him, because it would not have been right to thus deny his God. It is this mighty word, energized by the Holy Spirit, which has sustained all the martyrs of the Lord in all ages.—*Dr. Pentecost.*

Verse 20. In the summer of 1871 I met two Prussian officers. I asked them how the German troops behaved when going into battle. Did they cheer and encourage each other? I received this reply: "Never in our experience has the cry, 'We must conquer,' been heard from German soldiers; but in a hundred instances we have heard them resolutely exclaim, 'We must do our duty.'" A

sense of duty and not a love of glory made these soldiers invincible and victorious.—*Huxley.*

"They lifted up their voice to God." They appeal to the Scriptures, pleading the fulfillment of the promise. This is the secret of prevailing prayer. Wayland Hoyt says: "I was greatly interested in Mr. Spurgeon's method of prayer. It seemed so different from the struggling, agonizing sort I had read of as the kind in which many of the great saints engaged. 'How do you pray?' I once asked him, and his reply was, 'I find a particular promise over against this need of mine, and then I simply tell the Lord my need, and plead the promise, and believe he will be true to it.' 'So prayer is never a long and wearying and difficult thing with you?' I said. 'No; why should it be?' he asked. 'The Lord has promised in his word, and I believe what he has said.' 'But,' said I, 'do you never have a quiver of uncertainty?' 'I cannot say I never have it,' was his answer, 'but I am sure that in just the proportion in which I do have it I am wrong.'"

Whatever God gives to you in a promise be sure to send back to him in a prayer.—*Matthew Henry.*

"Lord, behold their threatenings." Not many years ago the Sultan of Turkey decreed that every Christian missionary should leave Turkey. The missionaries met in a prayer-meeting, beseeching God to interfere in their behalf. One of them, with stronger faith, said, "The Great Sultan of the Universe can change all this," and so he did. The Sultan of Turkey died on the very day which he had named for the expulsion of missionaries, and they were allowed to remain.—*Missionary Review of the World.*

A missionary in Russia was brought before a court official, who informed him, "My imperial master will not consent to the introduction of Christianity in his dominions." The missionary replied, "My divine Master will not ask permission of any one for the establishment of his kingdom."

"Grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word." By the mystery of the incarnation our whole being is fringed on every side with fatherliness indescribable; our little lives which sometimes seem so stricken, so abandoned, so tried, are virtually floating in an ocean of unfathomable love. When the smart and trial of educative affliction is upon us the wise tenderness of Eternal Love incarnate is whispering: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." It was recently recorded of a little lad in a London hospital, upon whom it was necessary to perform a surgical operation, and to whom it was impossible, owing to heart weakness, to administer chloroform, that his father said

to him, "Do 'Yes, father, hand." It is the believer's life. The is unattainably made perfect nate, ever-pr but, as a hand of the b ing omnipote

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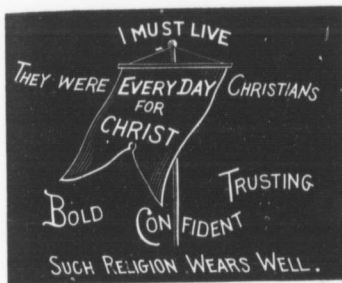
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The lesson the apostles were not afraid of public and did not The blackb Christians, tion. Before ner. It do not draw it reach the l "Every day on the boat over the pe "They wer day Christi ples, for "Christ." [other word trusting," That is the will last a l banner, " down the Christ, hol wears well every day ligion these

to him, "Do you think you can bear it, my son?" "Yes, father," he replied, "if you will hold my hand." It is a picture-lesson of the position of the believer in the midst of the perplexing trials of life. The operation is inevitable, the anodyne is unattainable. A fine and noble soul can only be made perfect by suffering, but God in the incarnate, ever-present Jesus, not as an abstract attribute, but as a loving, interested Friend, holds the hand of the believer with the grasp of sympathizing omnipotence.—*Canon Wilberforce.*

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The lesson of to-day sets forth the confidence of the apostles in God. They were in earnest, and were not afraid to confess Jesus as their Saviour in public and in private. They were loyal to God, and did not lower their banner because of threats. The blackboard says, "They were every day Christians," and that is the theme of the illustration. Before the school assembles draw the banner. It does not make any difference if you do not draw it artistically, because you are trying to reach the heart and not the eye. Write on it "Every day for Christ," and place nothing more on the board until the lesson is reviewed. Go over the points of the lesson briefly, and write, "They were [every day] Christians." Not Sunday Christians, but all the week, every day disciples, for "they were every day Christians for Christ." [Read this from the board.] Write the other words on the board: "Bold, confident, trusting," and then the sentence at the bottom. That is the kind of religion that wears well; it will last a life-time. Conclude by writing over the banner, "I must live." Then let the school read down the board: "I must live every day for Christ, bold, confident, trusting. Such religion wears well." It is not a Sunday suit, but genuine every day working clothes. That is the sort of religion these early Christians had.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Show the time, place, and environments of this lesson. Picture three scenes—Peter and John in the presence of the council; God's people, "let go, going to their own;" the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.... The spirit of the enemies of Christ: (1) A spirit of unreasoning hatred; (2) Lack of principle (verse 19); (3) Despotic threatening (verse 21); (4) Disloyalty to God (verse 27).... The spirit of Christ's followers in trial: (1) A spirit of moral principle (verse 19); (2) Testimony of personal experience (verse 20); (3) Delight in the communion of saints (verse 23); (4) A spirit of praise (verse 24); (5) Familiarity with God's word (verse 25); (6) A spirit of faith (verses 27, 28); (7) A spirit of holy ambition (verses 29, 30); (8) A spirit in harmony with that of God; (9) A spirit of boldness (verses 29, 31).... How God helps his people in trial—by giving them: (1) Clear convictions; (2) Courage; (3) The moral support of good men; (4) Christian fellowship; (5) His word; (6) Direct divine help; (7) Manifest tokens of answer to prayer; (8) The Holy Spirit.... The results of trial to God's cause: (1) It develops noble character; (2) It develops unity in the Church; (3) It turns God's people to the divine word for comfort; (4) It increases faith in God.... What are the duties for us here indicated?

References.

FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 19: Prose, 2297, 5115. Ver. 25: Prose, 2865. Ver. 29: Prose, 934, 457-463, 7579-7589, 11127. Ver. 31: Prose, 6894-6897, 2273, 938.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN MARGER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Faith Gives Courage.*

Describe Peter and John as they stand before the council. They are prisoners, but they are not ashamed or afraid. Are they alone? No; Jesus had said to them, "I will come to you," and he has come. Peter and John believed on him with all their hearts, and this gave them courage. Bad men may have boldness, but only Christians can feel true courage or strength in the soul. This is for the child as well as the apostle.



Call to remembrance the cowardice of Peter when his Master was brought before the rulers. Recall also the day of Pentecost when the Lord came, as he said he would, to live in the hearts of his disciples. This was what made Peter strong. It was better than seeing Jesus's human form, or hearing his

man voice, to have him in the heart—the Comforter.

After the enemies of Jesus had set them free, where did they go? To the little company of the friends of Jesus.

The true children of our Lord love each other, and where they meet is home. They went "home," and then they and all the other disciples "went and told Jesus" all about it. They could not see him with their eyes—where was he? Yes, his Spirit was in them, and they were nearer to Jesus than they had ever been before.

Ask about the little sorrows and trials of the children. To whom do they go with them? Yes; father and mother are nearer than any body they can see, but Jesus is nearest of all, and always can help; he will never leave us. Tell him.

Will he hear? Just see how he heard and answered the disciples when they prayed in the name of the "holy child Jesus." The place where they prayed was shaken, and the Holy Spirit of Jesus filled them with love and courage, so that they could do just what they had prayed to do—speak with boldness the words Jesus had given them to say.

Ask if there are enemies of Jesus now. Would the children be ready to speak of him to such? When others laugh at or scorn him, could they say "I know Jesus. He is my Father, and I am his child?" Then it must be that he has come to live in your heart.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON VII. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

[Aug. 14.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6. 7.

Authorized Version.

Acts 5. 1-11. [Commit to memory verses 9-11.]

1 But a certain man named An'a-ni'as, with Sapphi'ra his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Pe'ter said, An'a-ni'as, why hath Sa'tan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power; why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And An'a-ni'as hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Pe'ter answered unto her, Tell me whether

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

I am coming to the cross,
I've found a joy in sorrow.
Take my life and let it be,
Father, what'e'er of earthly bliss.
When Jesus comes to reward.

No. 2.

Hear thou my prayer.
Heavenly Father, send thy blessing.
I love the name of Jesus.
Christians, lift your voices.
Go tell it to Jesus.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did the council command Pe'ter and John? **Not to speak in Jesus's name.**
2. What did the apostles say that they must speak? **What they had seen and heard.**
3. What did they do when set free? **Praised God.**
4. What example did they show? **Boldness in Christ's name.**
5. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"They spake the word of God,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

30. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third Person in the blessed Trinity, one in the Godhead with the Father and the Son.

Revised Version.

- 1 But a certain man named An'a-ni'as, with Sapphi'ra his wife, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the 3 apostles' feet. But Pe'ter said, An'a-ni'as, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast 5 not lied unto men, but unto God. And An'a-ni'as hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that 6 heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.
- 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was 8 done, came in. And Pe'ter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much.

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ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Pe'ter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

TIME.—A. D. 30, a few days after the events of the last lesson. **PLACE.**—Jerusalem. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The penalty of sin.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5. 1-11.
 Tu. Hypocrisy condemned. Matt. 6. 1-6.
 W. Heart and mouth. Matt. 12. 31-37.
 Th. Fate of hypocrites. Matt. 7. 15-23.
 F. Lying lips. Prov. 12. 13-22.
 S. Be sincere. Eccl. 5. 1-6.
 S. An omniscient God. Psa. 139. 1-12.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 73, New Canadian Hymnal.

God calling yet! shall I not hear?

No. 89, New Canadian Hymnal.

The door of God's mercy is open.

No. 76, New Canadian Hymnal.

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling.

DOMINION HYMNAL

Hymns, Nos. 69, 71, 68.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Ananias, v. 1-6.

Why did Ananias sell his property?

What was implied in offering his money to the apostles?

By whose consent was part of the price withheld?

Wherein was the sin? (Deut. 23. 21.)

Against whom was the offense really committed?

How did Peter know of the deceit?

From what does all lying proceed? (John 8. 44.)

What excuse is there for an *acted* lie?

What divine judgment fell upon the deceiver?

What duty was performed by the disciples?

2. Sapphira, v. 7-11.

What lying statement did the wife make to Peter?

With what sin did Peter charge her?

What warning had its immediate fulfillment?

- 9 And she said, Yea, for so much. But Pe'ter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband.
- 11 And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

What is the divine judgment upon liars? (Rev. 21. 8.)

Why is there no possibility of an undiscovered sin?

Practical Teachings.

Where does this lesson teach that—

1. We may lie in act as well as in word?
2. Our secret sins are all known to God?
3. Sin under pretense of serving God is most grievous?
4. The love of money is the root of all evil?
5. Satan is the father of lies?

Hints for Home Study.

Write down the sin for which you suppose Ananias and Sapphira lost their lives. Was it lying, or dishonesty, or miserliness? If not, what was it? Give your reasons.

Have there been no sinners as guilty as Ananias and Sapphira since their day? If so, why have not they been punished in the same way? Write the answer.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Ananias, v. 1-6.

What sale did Ananias and his wife make?

Of what deception were they guilty?

What did they do with a part of the money?

Who had prompted Ananias to his deception?

To whom had he lied?

What three questions did Peter ask about the land?

How did his words affect Ananias?

How did others who heard his words feel?

What was done with Ananias?

How long after did his wife come?

What did she know of what had happened?

What says the law about keeping vows? (Deut.

23. 21.)

2. Sapphira, v. 7-11.

What question did Peter ask Sapphira?

What was her reply?

Of what wicked compact did Peter accuse her?

What prediction did he utter?

What happened to her?

What then was done with her?

How did these things affect the Church?

What great truth is illustrated by this lesson? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The folly of a lie?
2. The wickedness of a lie?
3. The peril of a lie?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Who is the father of liars?

What apostle tells us that liars are not admitted to the heavenly kingdom?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who were Ananias and Sapphira? **Members of the early Church.**

What did they sell? **Their property.**

Why did they sell it? **To give the price to the Church.**

What did they pretend? **That they gave all.**

What did they really do? **Kept back a part.**

Of what were they guilty? **Deceit.**

What sin was behind this? **Love of money.**

What did Peter tell Ananias? **That he had lied to God.**

What became of Ananias? **He fell down and died.**

What was done with his body? **It was buried.**

Did his wife know what had happened? **She did not.**

When she came in what did Peter ask her about? **The price of the land.**

What did she tell him? **A lie.**

What did Peter show her? **Her sin.**

What followed? **She fell down and died.**

Why was this sin so severely punished? **To show how God hates falsehood.**

Words with Little People.

Jesus said, "I am the Truth." If Jesus lives in the heart we shall hate falsehood as he hates it.

Remember that love of money, or love of praise leads to sin! And remember that if we lie to one another we are lying to God.

Whisper Precept.

"I hate every false way."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

This somber lesson brings to our attention the deep viciousness of the Pharisaic spirit—a pretense to spiritual consecration while living for selfish ends. There must have been at this time many "non-producers" in the Church at Jerusalem, men without secular employment or income. The astonishing development of Christianity, our Lord's death and ascension, the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and the succeeding miracles had acted like a social earthquake; and among its many results were the rapid increase of membership in the infant Church and the removal of many of its members from their ordinary activities. With an enthusiastic spirit of brotherhood the richer converts consecrated their entire possessions to the service of the Church. Among others Barnabas, a wealthy Levite from Cyprus, sold his lands and laid the product at the apostles' feet. Ananias and Sapphira, a husband and wife, coveting a reputation for liberality while in their hearts they clung to their possessions, sold their lands, pretended to give all their wealth to the Church, but withheld a portion for themselves. It is not unlikely, as Dr. Schaff has suggested, that they believed that this new sect had before it a great financial future, and wished early to secure their own share in its coming prosperity. At all events, this was their deepest vice, not that they lied, but that they pretended to special consecration while living for themselves. Neither miserliness nor lying, both of which are loathsome sins, would have brought this sudden and awful punishment. It was "lying to the Holy Ghost;" that is to say, it was intentional hypocrisy.

Verses 1, 2. But. This story is introduced in contrast to that of Barnabas, a wealthy Levite of Cyprus, who afterward became Paul's companion, who had sold his land and laid his product "at the apostles' feet." Ananias was, like Barnabas, probably one of the richer members of the Church. **Sold a possession, and kept back part of the price.** "Purloined part of the price" is a better rendering. He sold his property professedly for the good of the Church. His sin consisted in that contemptible sort of hypocrisy which assumes saintliness and lays down duties for others to perform while it dodges one's own duties, which sounds a trumpet before almsgiving and seeks

glory of men. **His wife also.** This shows deliberate purpose. **Priety to it.** An old English phrase for privately knowing of it. **Laid it at the apostles' feet.** Probably openly as part of a religious service. (1) "It is easy to tell a lie, hard to tell but one."—Andrew Fuller. (2) *A lie may be told when not a word is spoken.* (3) *The best cause may have the worst professors.* (4) *Keeping back part of the price has ruined many a seeker of religion.*

3, 4. Why hath Satan filled thine heart. The apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost; Ananias was filled with Satan; neither could have been filled with either without personal consent. So

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that this question is one of stern reproof. **To lie to the Holy Ghost.** The venomous spirit of Pharisaism which had saturated with poison every religion, false and true, especially pernicated the Jewish hierarchy, and now for the first time showed itself in the Christian Church. (5) *We must not tamper with Satan's temptations. Was it not thine own?* Peter's questions are really affirmations. **Why hast thou conceived.** An assertion of personal responsibility and implication. **Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.** Ananias certainly had lied to men, but Peter means that the lie to God was infinitely greater in its moral character and its seriousness; so David in his penitence said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," at the very moment when he was publicly confessing how foully he had sinned against men. (6) *The possession of money involves special dangers.* (7) *Learn to loathe and hate a lie as vile and defiling to the soul and offensive to God.*

5. Gave up the ghost. An ancient phrase for surrendering the spirit, the principle of life. Whether this sudden death was the only punishment God inflicted on this sinner, or whether it was a foretaste of the more awful punishment awaiting him in the eternal world, it is idle to guess. God, who sees and knows all hearts, knew Ananias's character exactly, and meted out to him, as to all, justice tempered with mercy. **Great fear.** There was need of this fear. The Church had just been on the verge of danger from undue popularity. (8) *Let us profit by Ananias's sinful experience.*

6. Wound him up. Better, "wrapped him about." Coffins were not in use, and the ordinary grave clothing was long swathings of pure white linen, which were not put on, however, without elaborate washing and anointing of the corpse. This man's death was due to the direct act of an indignant God, and instinctively the conventional honors are omitted; the flowing robe is tightened around the poor dead feet, and the young men with solemnity hasten to the grave. Such graves were always open in the ancient East—caves with niches in their walls. This burial may have been only temporary, and supplemented afterward by conventional services, but this is not at all certain,

for by becoming a Christian Ananias had probably cut himself off from Hebrew ordinances, while in becoming a sinner he had cut himself off from Christian services. The careful medical and civic superintendence of burial, which is the chief safeguard of life in modern days, was unknown in the ancient world, and is indeed a product of Christendom. Notice the presence of young people in the very earliest Church.

7. Three hours after. We cannot at this distance of time explain the lengthened services of the Church, nor Sapphira's ignorance of her husband's astounding death. The guilty pair may have resided in a relatively distant suburb of Jerusalem. What would not Sapphira have done if she could have conjectured that those "three hours" were her last! (9) *Spend the next three hours as you would your last three.*

8. Answered does not imply a previous question. **Tell me.** The whole narrative implies that Peter acted throughout under the direction of the Holy Spirit. **So much.** This means "so much and no more." **Yea.** Sapphira deliberately lies.

9. How is it that ye have agreed together. Conspiracy to do wrong greatly aggravates guilt. It was Sapphira's duty to dissuade her husband from the sin to which he had been tempted. "They were neither hasty sinners, nor ignorant sinners, nor inconsiderate sinners."—*Allexander.* **Tempt the Spirit of the Lord.** To test God, and experiment whether he is as discerning, as pure, and as powerful as he claims to be. **The feet.** No scene in all sacred history is more dramatic than this. We almost hear the footfalls of those young men to-day. (10) *We may deceive others; we may deceive ourselves; we cannot deceive God.*

10. Straightway. Immediately. **At his feet.** She lay dead beside her money.

11. Great fear. Awe. Christians became afraid to sin, while worldlings became afraid to join a society whose purity was preserved in such an extraordinary way. This example, hung up at the gate-way to Christian history, reminds all who pass that, whensoever the pay-day may come, "the wages of sin is death." (11) *Christians are solemnly set apart to serve God, and their sins peculiarly displease him.*

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 2. Laid it at the apostles' feet. Reasons have already been given in these notes (see 2. 44) for holding that the community of goods in the primitive Church was neither universal nor compulsory. Moved by Christian love and sympathy, many liberal-minded believers sold lands and houses, and laid the money thus obtained "at the apostles' feet." The way in which the last

phrase is used here and in 4. 35, 37, indicates that it was a common expression for the voluntary donation of money to the common uses of the Church and the relief of poor believers. At the close of the last chapter Luke describes such a sale and gift by Joseph, a prominent member of the Church, a Levite and Cypriot, whose power as an exhorter had led the disciples to give him

the surname Barnabas, that is, "Son of exhortation." His generous act and the recognition it had received seem to have stirred the ambition of Ananias and Sapphira to win similar approbation in the Church. But while anxious to appear liberal, their greed prompted them to retain a part of the price, while they represented the portion they brought to the apostles as the whole of the money received. Their sin was thus a combination of ambition, covetousness, and deliberate falsehood.

3. To lie to the Holy Ghost. Or, as it may be rendered, "to deceive the Holy Ghost." The Church of Christ is the temple and dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3. 16, 17; Eph. 2. 21, 22; Rom. 8. 9); indeed, every believer's body may be called a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6. 19). But the apostles were, in an especial and unique sense, the possessors and representatives of the Spirit, who had been promised to guide them (John 16. 13) and to speak through them (Mark 13. 11). The premeditated attempt of Ananias and his wife to deceive the apostles proves either that they did not believe them to be divinely inspired, or that they rashly expected to deceive God.

6. The young men. This would be an exact rendering of the word used in verse 10. Here, however, the Greek term means "the younger men." As it corresponds to the term "presbyters," "elders," many have thought that an official class are meant. But since two different words are used to describe them in this brief account, and since it was not until after this that the apostles made an arrangement to relieve themselves of serving tables, it is better to refer this expression simply to the younger men present.

8. Peter answered. Not infrequently in the New Testament a person is said to "answer" when his remark is not a reply to any thing said, but "answers" to the circumstances (see, for example, Mark 9. 5).

11. Great fear came . . . upon all. The reasons for the sudden and awful character of this first act of Church discipline can be best understood by considering the exigencies of the time. The infant Church was being built up by the aid of miracles of healing, of tongues, of revelation and deliverance. It was consistent that it should be purified from hypocrites and impostors by a miracle of retribution. The seed which was to produce a world-wide harvest demanded a supernatural winnowing. Compare the cases of Elymas (13. 8-11), of the offenders at Corinth (1 Cor. 5. 3-5; 11. 30), of Nadab and Abihu (Num. 26. 61), Korah (Num. 16. 31-33), and Achan (Josh. 7. 22-25). Among the results of this miracle were an increased fear of sin within the Church and the conversion of multitudes of men and women from without (verse 14); indeed, the growth of the Church was so rapid as to arouse the jealousy of the Sanhedrin and lead them to arrest the apostles (verses 17, 18).

The Lesson Council.

Question 2. How far was the principle of communion observed in the Church of Jerusalem? Did it have a divine sanction? Ought it not to have been continued?

Their "communion" seems to have sprung from a brotherly spirit which led them to place the property of each at the service of all. Evidently they did not relinquish all their private property. The Galilean fishermen still owned their boats, and John had a home to offer to the mother of Jesus. It was purely voluntary, there being no divine or human requirements for it. The obligation of Ananias was not to give all his property, but to tell the truth about it. While it need not be continued in form, the spirit it expressed is ever binding. "Bear ye one another's burdens."—*Rev. George W. Brown, D.D.*

Its principle was observed to the fullest extent. See Acts 2. 44, 45; 4. 34-37. A very ancient Christian document says: "Thou shalt not turn away from him that is in want, but thou shalt share all things with thy brother, and shalt not say that they are thine own."—*Teaching of the Apostles*, chapter 4. Tertullian says the funds were never used to purchase social and religious privileges, nor exemption from martyrdom. See also Acts 24. 26. They followed the Spirit's suggestion. See also Mark 10. 21, 28-30. The principle had divine sanction. At the beginning of things God gave perfect models: Judaism a perfect ceremonial religion; at Jerusalem a model Christian Church. But as ideal things are for ideal beings, history shows us the perfect succeeded by the imperfect.—*Rev. Clinton D. Day.*

Doubtless it was only partial in its extent. The disciples at Jerusalem, owing to the scattered and moving character of the early Church, freely and lovingly gave of their possessions for the benefit of the local and also of the distant believers. It did not have any special divine sanction, save in the general spiritual outpouring of that epoch in the kingdom of God. Ananias and Sapphira could have kept a part or all their property. If the custom had been continued the Church might have been burdened much earlier with a mendicant laity as well as a priesthood. Even then and since the ideal could not be made the real.—*M. V. B. Knox, D.D.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The First Sin in the Church.

I. THE MOTIVES.

- 1. Covetousness.** "Kept back part." v. 2. "Beware of covetousness." Luke 12. 15. "Which is idolatry." Col. 3. 5.

2. **Temptation.** "*Satan filled.*" v. 3.

"As a roaring lion." 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9.

"The wiles of the devil." Eph. 6. 11.

II. THE SIN.

Lid. . . unto God. v. 4.

"All liars. . . in the lake." Rev. 21. 8.

"Lying lips. . . abomination." Prov. 12. 22.

III. THE DISCOVERY.

Peter said, Ananias. v. 3.

"Your sin will find you out." Num. 32. 23.

"There is nothing covered." Matt. 10. 26.

IV. THE PUNISHMENT.

Give up the ghost. v. 5.

"Wages of sin is death." Rom. 6. 23.

"Sin. . . bringeth forth death." Jas. 1. 15.

V. THE RESULT.

Great fear came upon all. v. 11.

"Serve the Lord with fear." Psa. 2. 11.

"With fear and trembling." Phil. 2. 12.

Thoughts for Young People.

Sin in the Church.

1. *Sin is to be found in the Church of the sinless Christ.* Even in the pentecostal Church, newly baptized with the Holy Ghost, we find it. But its presence should not shake our faith in Christians or in Christ. Such sin is closely allied to hypocrisy, for the sinner who does not desire to seem better than he is will not wrap holy professions about his moral deformities. Now there would be no hypocrisy if there were not a larger amount of genuineness. The issue of counterfeit coins always follows a larger issue of genuine coins.

2. *The simplest of sins is Pharisaism*—the use of religious professions and activities to cloak selfishness of heart. Against this our Lord's fiercest denunciations were hurled. He had gentle words for the thief and the harlot, but not once do we hear from him a tender tone toward the whited sepulchers of society. Some of the worst outcasts never choose their sin; they are borne out by a strong current of temptation; they are objects for pity only. But a hypocrite can make no such apology. This was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira; not that they lied, but they *lied against the Holy Ghost.* Toward such hypocrites God's wrath is a consuming fire.

3. *It is easy to slide into hypocrisy.* Let the spirit of the world once nestle in the heart of a disciple, and a hypocrite's life is already begun. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." You are more likely to *slip* than to *trip*. Few Christians step face foremost into sin, but how many backslide! Wherever there is a pretense of consecration while there is yet a withholding from God, there is a modern Pharisee.

4. *Sin in the Church is a seed.* Our Lord likened righteousness (the kingdom of heaven) to a mustard seed; but sin, as certainly as goodness, brings

forth fruitful harvests. One sin in the Church never stands alone; it brings forth many other sins, and usually affects many lives.

5. *Our duty toward sin in the Church.* If it has been cherished in our own hearts our duty is clear. Better enter the kingdom of God with a hand cut off or an eye plucked out than to be shut in outer darkness. But suppose you think you see sin in others' lives, what are you to do? 1. Remember that sin in the Church is an insult to God; that it is an evil disease which may contaminate those who are now the purest; and that it sadly cripples the spiritual power of the Church. 2. Do not forget at the same time that you are not an authorized or competent judge of others' lives; that it is folks who have beams in their own eyes that see most notes in others'; that often the Church can endure the sinner more safely than the sinner can endure without the Church; that spiritual arrogance and lack of charity are as unchristian as is hypocrisy; that, according to Paul's testimony, there were many wicked people in the early Church, but only one judgment such as this. Pray for divine guidance, weigh well the opinions of others, be sure that your motive is love to the sinner as well as love to the Church, and doubt not that God will guide you to your duty. Read what Paul says about our duty to a brother "overtaken in a fault." See Gal. 6. 1, 2.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

"Nobody knows any thing about it," thinks Ananias, "or just Sapphira knows!" As he tucks away in its hiding-place a part of the price of the land he sold for the apostles' common fund he looks all around. His sharp eyes take in every thing. Any body see him? No, he thinks. Nobody sees, nobody knows. Just Sapphira knows. He looks all around once more and finishes the hiding of the money. Then he goes to the apostles' meeting. I fancy I hear the shekels jingling in his money-bag as he complacently passes into the meeting. He has sold "a possession," and now he is bringing a contribution to the common fund. He is willing every body should hear those shekels jingle. They make a sweet music to the praise of the generous, self-sacrificing Ananias. Nobody knows—save Sapphira—that a lie is in the hypocrite's bag.

He now comes up before the apostles.

He opens his bag.

His self-denying shekels jingle out in a shining heap. He smiles. As he bows in humility above his lie, does he say, "Nobody knows—nobody knows but Sapphira!"

Suddenly, above the hypocrite's bowed head, breaks out like an unexpected clap of thunder the voice of Peter, "Ananias, why, hath Satan filled

thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

What? God knowing?

O, when Ananias was saying, "Nobody knows," looking with cautious eyes all around, why did he not look up? Did he realize that God was looking down? God knew. And it is the divine sight that now seems to be in Peter's eyes, that flashes out of them and burns and searches deep in Ananias's heart, and sees the awful secret there.

"Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God," thunders Peter.

O, Ananias, Ananias!

Why did you try to cheat God? There was a commotion in the meeting when you complacently poured out your shekels and Peter rebuked you. There is a more serious agitation when the bearers of the dead take off Ananias, and with an awe in their faces carry the lifeless body away.

But where is the one that knew about Ananias's guilt and shared in it and buried it in her bosom? Where is Sapphira?

It is three hours since Ananias was borne away, and Sapphira has not yet come. Has she been busy with domestic cares? Has she been obliged to go to the market-place? Has she wanted to make more secure the hiding-place of the money that was kept back?

"Nobody knows but Ananias" has she said?

And Ananias dead! O, Sapphira!

She goes at last to the meeting-place of the apostles. Perhaps it is to find Ananias. She bustles in before the throng, looking round for Ananias. The apostles are here. Many others are present. Where—where is Ananias? Suddenly that searching face of Peter confronts her. What is it about his face that startles her? And his eyes, how they search like candles! She wishes Peter would not look so. The look is nothing compared with his voice. It breaks out suddenly. How it thrills her!

"Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?"

"Yea, for so much."

What, Sapphira?

"Nobody knows—only Ananias," does she assure herself?

O, guilty soul, what have you done? Did you think God was blind and deaf and dumb?

But things grow confused before her. She hears Peter say something about "agreeing together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord," about "thy husband buried"—and soon the bearers of the dead are slowly going out, carrying the lifeless Sapphira.

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 1, 2. When Barnabas, a man of wealth, brought the price of his possession to lay at the apostles' feet they never dreamed that the devil

would so soon present for acceptance a counterfeit of that noble generosity. No sooner does God work a good work of grace and sow the good seed of the kingdom than the devil comes by night and sows tares. Cain counterfeited Abel's acceptable sacrifice; Janes and Jambres counterfeited the miracles of Moses in the wilderness; Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord; the prophets of Baal turned the hearts of all Israel from the true worship of Jehovah, while as yet they were calling on his name. And now in the young Christian Church we have a spurious, lying, and false consecration which, if God had not forthwith stamped out, would have speedily brought the Church to ruin. Moses had his Korah, Joshua had his Achan, Elisha had his Gehazi, Jesus had his Judas, the apostles had their Ananias, Paul had Alexander the coppersmith and Demas who loved this present world.—*Dr. Pentecost.*

Covetousness. St. Paul says, "The love of money is the root of all evil." The first defeat which came to the children of Israel in the promised land was caused by Achan's covetousness. The infant Church meets the same sin. It is a root-sin, and from it springs lying, stealing, hypocrisy, murder. The salon-curse is rooted in covetousness, as was slavery.

In excavating Pompeii a skeleton was found with the fingers clutching quantities of gold. The man lost his life in attempting to save his gold.

Hypocrisy. "To lie to the Holy Ghost." The shops in the square of St. Mark were all religiously closed, for the day was a high festival. We were much disappointed, for it was our last day, and we desired to take away with us some souvenirs of lovely Venice. But our regret soon vanished, for on looking at the shop we meant to patronize we readily discovered signs of traffic within. We stepped to the side door and found that when two other customers had been served we might purchase to our hearts' content, saint or no saint. After this fashion too many keep the laws of God to the eye, but violate them in the heart. The shutters are up as if the man no more dealt with sin and Satan, but a brisk commerce is going on behind the scenes.—*Spurgeon.*

Will you say that there are no real stars because you sometimes see meteors fall, which for a time appeared to be stars? Will you say that blossoms never produce fruit because many of them fall off, and some fruit which appeared sound is rotten at the core? Equally absurd is it to say there is no such thing as real religion because many who profess it fall away or prove to be hypocrites at heart.—*Payson.*

"Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Harry and Lucy were playing in the dining-room when their mother set a basket of cakes on the ta-

table and went out. They were frosted and looked very tempting.

"How nice they look!" said Harry; "I'm going to take one. Mother won't know it. She didn't count them."

"But God did," answered Lucy.

Harry's hand dropped to his side, and after a little he said, "I guess God does count things, for the hairs of our heads are all numbered."—*New York Christian Advocate*.

Lying. Two scoundrels sought to obtain money from Archbishop Leighton, one feigning death and the other soliciting charity on this account. When the solicitor returned to his accomplice, he found him dead indeed, killed by lightning as he feigned to be.

Verses 5, 10. The Egyptian queen was a fool when she dissolved her pearl in one cup of pleasure. The Indian chief was a fool when he underrated the current and launched his canoe on the rapids. He is a fool who sports with a serpent or heedlessly combats a lion. But sin brings its unerring consequences more surely than any of those.—*Talmage*.

The Teachers' Meeting.

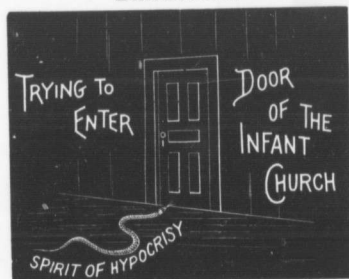
Begin with the incident of Barnabas in the previous chapter, the community of goods, and its motives.... Show the sin of Ananias, and get the scholars to analyze its elements: (1) Selfishness; (2) Inordinate longing for the appearance of sanctity; (3) Deceit; (4) Conscious hypocrisy; (5) —; (6) —; (7) —.... What sins are here warned against? Obtain answers from the class, and suggest illustrations of each sin.... Especially point out the evil of lying, and show how a lie may be spoken without words.... The dangers of sin in the Church. See *Thoughts for Young People*.... Why are not sins punished in the same way now?... The attributes of God: (1) Omniscience; (2) Holiness—hatred of sin; (3) Interest in his people; (4) Presence in the Church; (5) His power, etc. What does this suggest that the character of the Church should be?... A good working outline is that suggested by *Illustrative Notes*: I. Ananias's sins: (1) Love of the praise of men; (2) Covetousness; (3) Lying; (4) Hypocrisy. II. God's character here shown: (1) Omniscience; (2) Impartiality; (3) Justice; (4) Power. III. Teachings concerning the Church: (1) High moral standards; (2) Human imperfections; (3) Responsibility.

References.

FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 6: Preparation for burial, 822; time for burial, 826.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 5469-5471, 11808, 11809. Ver. 3:

Prose, 7446, 1510, 5688. Ver. 5: Prose, 2937, 10213-10216, 3745-3754.

Blackboard.



It is often said that the mortal sin of Ananias and Sapphira was telling a falsehood, but the true teaching of this lesson seems to be that they were punished for trying to introduce into the infant Church the same spirit of hypocrisy which poisoned the religion as professed by the Jews. It was the same spirit of the Pharisee which our Lord condemned. There could be no temporizing with that evil influence, and the punishment was of such a nature that the infant Church was profoundly impressed by it. The blackboard represents this venomous spirit by a serpent trying to enter a closed door—the door of the infant Church.

STEPS IN SIN.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

- I. A sinful plot. (God saw it.)
- II. An acted lie. (God is not mocked.)
- III. A spoken lie. (Peter knew it.)
- IV. Swift punishment.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Sin of Making Believe.*

Blackboard. Make a straight path, with "Truth" printed upon it, and tell the lesson story, crayon in hand, with which to mark deviations.

To teach this lesson so that it may seem a real thing, and take hold upon little hearts and consciences, will require earnest study. In these days of shams and pretenses, even in the Church of Christ, how gladly should we labor to make the teaching of "truth in the inward parts" both impressive and far-reaching!

Find how much the children can tell about the first Christian Church. Tell that now it had grown to be a large company. It was a happy company. What makes home a happy place? Yes, "Love." There was a great deal of love in

the early Christian Church, love for God and love for one another, and this made them happy, and glad to help one another.



Compare the early Church to a beautiful garden when the head gardener watches the growth of the different kinds of seeds which he has planted for beauty and for use. If a plant of one evil seed is found among his beautiful and useful plants, he pulls it up by the roots and throws it far out of the garden.

An evil seed was hiding in the garden of the early Church. It was the love of money and untruth in the hearts of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. Describe the scene when the noble rich man, Barnabas, came and laid down all he had in this world at the feet of the apostles, because he loved the Lord Jesus and his Church, and all the little company did the same, until there was none who was rich, and none who was poor in that little Church. Then picture Ananias and Sapphira doing as the others had done. They longed to be admired, as Barnabas was, for giving all, but they had secretly agreed to keep back a part of the price of the land they had sold. That bad seed, the love of money, had sprung up in their hearts [here draw on the blackboard a seed with downward root and upward shoot]; and soon another seed—untruth—that had been hiding in their hearts for many years sprang up beside it [make seed beside the first], so that the Lord had to take it out of his garden—the early Church—lest the seed should be scattered through it. Show the children by the blackboard that the root of evil things is very often the love of money. And the seed is sure to be the love of self. From it springs that plant of many branches, “all evil.” Let the children name different kinds of sin, which may be printed on the board.

Do not dwell upon the manner and circumstances of the death of Ananias and Sapphira. Tell the children that the fruit of sin is death, and that it always follows, if not repented of, as the harvest follows the seed-sowing. They cannot choose pinks and morning-glories after sowing thistles and nettles. They will surely have what they have sowed. They who think wrong will soon speak wrong and act wrong. So do not let evil thoughts that come silently like the downy

thistle seed find any place to stay, or they will grow and bear the fruit of death.

Get from the children their idea of what makes a lie. Show that a lie is always a lie, even when it looks or sounds like the truth. “God is not mocked.” We cannot deceive him; he says, “I am the Truth.” The only way to be true is to let the Truth come into our hearts to stay. He will come in and make it all right, and sow good seed and take care of his little garden.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Thy word, almighty Lord.
There is a Friend, a Friend you need.
More love to thee, O Christ.
From every stormy wind that blows.
Stand up, stand up for Jesus.

No. 2.

Holy, holy, holy Lord.
I bring my sins to thee.
Seek, my soul, the narrow gate.
In the Saviour's steps I'll follow.
There's work for us all.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira?
Lying.
2. What led them to lie? **The love of money.**
3. To whom did they tell the lies? **To the Church.**
4. Whom did Peter say they tried to deceive?
God.
5. What punishment came upon them? **Sudden death.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

31. Is the Person of the Divine Spirit often mentioned in Scripture?

Yes; from the beginning of the Bible to the end, but especially in the New Testament.

32. How is He generally spoken of?

Sometimes as a personal Agent and sometimes as an influence or gift coming down from God.

A. D. 30.] LESSON VIII. THE APOSTLES PERSECUTED. [Aug. 21.]
GOLDEN TEXT. We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5. 29.

Authorized Version.

Acts 5. 25-41. [Commit to memory verses 29-32.]
25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

Revised Version.

25 And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought

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26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high-priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Je-ru-sa-lem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Pe'ter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Je'sus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Is-ra-el, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

34 Then stood there one up in the council, a Phar'i-see, named Ga-ma-li-el, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Is-ra-el, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theu'das, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to naught.

37 After this man rose up Ju'das of Gal'i-lee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Je'sus, and let them go.

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

them, but without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high-priest asked them, 28 saying, We straitly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Je-ru-sa-lem with your teaching, and intend to bring 29 this man's blood upon us. But Pe'ter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God 30 rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Je'sus whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. 31 Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to 32 Is-ra-el, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them. But there stood up one in the council, a Phar'i-see, named Ga-ma-li-el, a doctor of the law, had in honor of all people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while. And he said unto them, Ye men of Is-ra-el, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about 36 to do. For before these days rose up Theu'das, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, and came to 37 nought. After this man rose up Ju'das of Gal'i-lee in the days of the enrollment, and drew away some of the people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be 39 overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be 49 found even to be fighting against God. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Je'sus, and let 41 them go. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name.

TIME.—A. D. 30. **PLACE.**—Jerusalem.
DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—God the supreme Ruler.

HOME READINGS.

M. The apostles persecuted. Acts 5. 25-32.

Tu. The apostles persecuted. Acts 5. 33-42.

W. Delivered from prison. Acts 5. 17-24.

Th. Pleading God. 1 Thess. 2. 1-12.

F. All must suffer. 2 Tim. 3. 10-17.

S. Suffering from righteousness.

1 Pet. 3. 12-18.

S. Glorifying in suffering. 2 Cor. 11. 21-33.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 190, New Canadian Hymnal.

Soldiers of Christ, arise.

No. 187, New Canadian Hymnal.

Disciples of Jesus, why stand ye here idle?

No. 185, New Canadian Hymnal.

I want to be a worker for the Lord.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 90, 88, 87.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **Bold Testimony**, v. 25-32.

- Who were brought before the council for trial?
 Who brought them?
 What was this council composed of?
 When had the council commanded as verse 28 describes?
 Why was their command not obeyed?
 What confession of the high-priest shows the zeal of the apostles?
 What is meant by his blood being on them? (Read Matt. 27. 24, 25.)
 What short, pointed reply is given in verse 29?
 Was this a rule of action with them, or a mere notion at that moment? (See Acts 4. 19, 29.)
 Having answered, they follow up their opportunity by the words of verses 30-32; state each fact here given.

What more for Jesus could they have said?
 What kind of men does this show them to have been?

In what ought we to be like them?

2. **Wise Counsel**, v. 33-41.

- What counsel was first taken by the rulers? (Verse 85.)
 What is meant by their being "cut"?
 What counsel did Gamaliel give? (Verses 35-39.)
 What description of this man is given in verse 34?
 Which of these diverse counsels was the wiser?
 What result was reached by the council? (Verse 40.)
 What is there *strange* in all this?
 Is God for you? How may he become so?
 What reason had the apostles to rejoice?
 What is the GOLDEN TEXT?

Practical Teachings.

Where do we learn—

1. That divine truth in weak hands is able to overthrow the mighty?
2. That God witnesses for those who witness for him?
3. That only the highest duty claims the preference of our service?

Hints for Home Study.

Ascertain the three constituencies of the Sanhedrin (from some Bible dictionary or "lesson-help"), and commit to writing.

Ascertain facts concerning Gamaliel.

Make a list of the several occasions when the

Sanhedrin becomes a leading actor in Bible history.

Ascertain its limitations as far as possible.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **Bold Testimony**, v. 25-32.

- What report was made to the priests about the apostles?
 Who went to arrest the apostles?
 What did these officers fear?
 Before whom were the prisoners brought?
 What question did the high-priest ask?
 What did he say the apostles had done?
 Who replied to him?
 To whom did Peter say obedience was first due? (GOLDEN TEXT.)
 What had the rulers done with Jesus?
 What had God done with him?
 Who were witnesses to these things?
 To whom was the Holy Spirit given?
 What promise of Jesus was thus fulfilled? (Chap. 1. 8.)

2. **Wise Counsel**, v. 33-41.

- How were the hearers affected by Peter's words?
 Who then addressed the council?
 With what words of warning did he begin?
 What did he say about Theudas?
 To what other false leader did he refer?
 What happened to his followers?
 What did Gamaliel urge as to the apostles?
 What reason did he give?
 How did the council receive his advice?
 What did they do to the apostles?
 What did they command them?
 What did the apostles do?
 When is persecution a blessing? (Matt. 5. 11.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. To obey God rather than man?
2. That God will take care of his own cause?
3. That suffering for Christ's sake is cause for joy?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

What apostle first acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God?

Who first told the apostles that they were to be witnesses of Christ?

Can you name a pupil of Gamaliel's who afterward became famous as a Christian?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did the rulers again do? **Put the apostles in prison.**

Why did they do this? **To stop their work.**
 Who set them free? **The angel of the Lord.**

Where did he command them to preach? **In the temple.**

Who again went to arrest them? **The captain and officers.**

Why did they not harm them? **They feared the people.**

Where were they taken? **Before the council.**

Of what did the high-priest complain? **Their disobedience.**

What had they been commanded not to do? **To teach in the name of Jesus.**

What did Peter say? **That they must obey God.**

What did he declare the apostles to be? **Jesus's witnesses.**

What did the rulers then talk of doing? **Slaying the apostles.**

Who advised them to let the men alone? **Gamaliel.**

What did he say would surely fail? **Work not of God.**

What will always succeed in the end? **Work that is of God.**

What did the council finally do? **They beat the apostles and let them go.**

Words with Little People.

STAND UP FOR JESUS

When you are laughed at for his sake.

When you are threatened for his sake.

Whenever you have the opportunity.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus."

Whisper Motto.

"We ought to obey God."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

The temple service is no more the liveliest center of Jerusalem's interest, nor are the "chief priests and elders" any longer the leading men. Twelve Galilean peasants have all of a sudden become the most conspicuous persons in Jewry. Both they and the priests claim divine authority to direct men's consciences, and a test of strength between the two is inevitable. This lesson tells how that test was made. It had been determined to crush Christianity by the arrest of its leaders. But an angel of the Lord by night opened the doors of the prison in which they awaited their trial, and sent them back to the temple to preach. The Sanhedrin was called together early the next morning, and officers were sent to the prison for Peter and his companions. They returned with the astonishing statement: "The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within." By this message the Sanhedrin was thrown into consternation, and the events of our lesson followed. The apostles were brought back to the Sanhedrin from their congregation in the temple courts. Peter made a defense which was so thoroughly aggressive and unanswerable that murder seemed to be the only reply that could be made. But the wise Gamaliel counseled caution, and his counsels prevailed. The apostles were beaten, again commanded to be silent, and dismissed. Their punishment only increased their joy—for already it was proved that the kingdom of heaven was stronger than the rulers who had counseled together against the Lord's Anointed.

Verse 25. Came one and told them. Running breathless from the temple into the Sanhedrin's circle, just as Michaiiah, six hundred years before, had run from the temple courts to the king's house to tell the princes of Judah the words of God's prophet as read by Baruch the scribe. **Behold.** An exclamation of wonder. Their escape was astonishing, but this was not the chief cause of surprise. That escaped prisoners should not hide, but should boldly, in the city's open sunlight, repeat the deed for which they had been fettered, was almost beyond belief. Notice the climax of description. You put them in prison; but now they are in the temple; they are standing there, not skulking, as might have been expected; and, most wonderful of all, they are teaching the people. (1) *No opportunity to testify for our Master should be lost.*

26. The captain. The chief of the temple guard. **Without violence.** Evidently the apostles made no resistance. They did not fear

the rulers, but the rulers feared the people; for the popularity of the Christians was steadily increasing. There were several reasons for this. They had helped and blessed the common people in many ways; the supernatural power which attended them greatly increased public esteem; their chief opponents thus far were Sadducean priests, and the Sadducees as a class were unpopular. **Stoned.** Stoning was an ancient legal punishment among the Hebrews; but most of the "stonings" recorded in the New Testament were due to mob violence. (2) *Even the worst rulers fear public sentiment.*

27. Brought them. To the hall of judgment. **Set them before the council.** Made them stand in front of the middle of that arc of seats described in Lesson V. **High-priest.** Probably Annas, who continued to be called "high-priest" after his term was ended. Dr. Gloag calls attention to the fact that the Sanhedrin was an aristocracy, divided into two factions,

the leaders of which were, presumably, Annas the Sadducee and Gamaliel the Pharisee.

28. Straitly. Strictly. **This name.** The name of Jesus. If Jesus, doomed to death by these men, were indeed the Messiah, then were they murderers and traitors. **Filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.** Jerusalem was the heart of Hebrew worship, and, to a good degree, the doctrinal center of the East. **This man's blood upon us.** The rulers wanted now to *shuttle* the guilt on Judas and Pilate; but the echoes of their cry at the crucifixion could still be heard—"His blood be on us and on our children!" (3) *God is the judge of moral guilt.* Annas was too cowardly to ask how the apostles had escaped from prison; he dared not confront supernatural power. He was too supercilious to mention Jesus by name—"this man" and "your doctrine" are his most respectful terms. "The judges," says Dr. Lumby, "have taken the place of culprits, and deprecate accusation where they would naturally be dealing out penalties." (4) *A guilty conscience needs no accuser.*

29. Peter. The more one studies this man's career, the more one is impressed by his amazing natural gifts as well as by his supernatural endowment. This and the following three verses contain the "skeleton" of what has been described as "one of the finest specimens of pleading on record." Analyze it thoroughly, and you will be better able to understand and teach all the lessons of the quarter. **We ought to obey God rather than men.** See the first verse of Lesson VI. The old charge brings out the old defense.

30. The God of our fathers. Christianity is the ripe fruit of which Mosaicism was the budding blossom. The apostles never tire to affirm that the same power stands behind Moses and Jesus. **Hanged on a tree.** Crucified. **God raised him, but ye slew him.** (5) *Duties are ours; results, God's.*

31. His right hand. To do a thing with the right hand is an idiom for doing it efficiently. **A Prince.** Peter claims that the proudest of his judges owes allegiance to this carpenter-rabbi whom **God hath exalted** and enthroned over a kingdom "not of this world." **Repentance** had no technical theological meaning in those days. Peter declares that Israel's duty is to "turn about" in heart and life, away from priests and elders, so as to have its **sins** forgiven by the Nazarene Saviour. (6) *Christ is the sinner's Saviour.*

32. We are his witnesses. Not rabbis, theologians, doctors, or priests. (7) *We are "witnesses" as truly as was Peter.* (8) *Clear Christian testimony is always useful.* **Holy Ghost.** Who had been of late manifest to all Jerusalem in many ways. The miracles of the early Church were its divine credentials.

33. Cut to the heart. Literally, "sawn through;" not made penitent, but furiously angry. **Took counsel to slay them.** "So, to get rid of the fear of one man's blood being brought upon them, they would take the lives of twelve men more."—Farrar. (9) *A guilty conscience is usually illogical.*

34. Gamaliel. The first of two celebrated rabbis of this name; the teacher of Paul; a man of almost unequalled reputation for learning and wisdom. **Put the apostles forth.** That the consultation of the Sanhedrin might be unrestrained. **A little space.** A little while.

35. Ye men of Israel. What follows is doubtless, like what we have of Peter's address, a mere synopsis. **Take heed.** Gamaliel has probably little sympathy with the gospel doctrine, but he has a tolerant spirit; he believes in the resurrection, and he hates the Pharisees.

36. Theudas. Which of several unsuccessful political agitators who followed each other in rapid succession is here alluded to is not known. Theudas was a common name among the Jews.

37. Judas of Galilee. Josephus mentions this insurgent, but sometimes calls him "a Gaulonite." **The days of the taxing.** Judas claimed that to pay taxes to a foreign government was to put on fetters of slavery, and that God was Israel's only proper king. The political fiction afterward known as "Zealots" was probably formed from his followers, of whom the apostle Simon Zealotes was one.

38, 39. Refrain. Stand away from. **This counsel.** The apostles' doctrine. **It will come to naught.** Gamaliel does not see the future. He was a strong adherent of the Mosaic law. This law the apostles thus far strictly observed. But in addition to their orthodoxy they cherished certain peculiar beliefs about the Christ. Now Gamaliel knew that one of these two beliefs must before long give way; they must give up their belief in Jesus's Messiahship, or give up their Judaism; and, from the Pharisees' standpoint, the last alternative involved utter ruin. But (10) *The success of a doctrine or system does not prove its divine origin.*

40, 41. To him they agreed. His plan was an easy way out of trouble. **Beaten them.** They were probably punished as guilty parties to a needless controversy. See the law in Deut. 25. 1-3. The scourge was applied to the naked back. **Commanded that they should not speak.** The Sanhedrin must have known that this command would be disobeyed. **Worthy to suffer shame for his name.** Scourging was regarded as a "shameful punishment." They rejoiced, for they now felt the full force of their Master's benediction. (11) *Suffering for Christ's sake has special comforts.*

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 30. Raised up Jesus. Some interpreters think that "raised up" here means "sent into the world," or "made to appear." See 3. 22; 13. 22. But it is far more probable that Peter applies this expression to the resurrection. The word used refers in the Acts and Epistles almost exclusively to the resurrection, even when the ordinary phrase "from the dead" is omitted. See, for example, 3. 15; 4. 10; 10. 40; 13. 37, and 1 Cor. 15. 12-52. Verse 31 declares that exaltation of Jesus by or at the right hand of God which followed the ascension. Comp. 2. 32-54.

32. We are witnesses . . . and so is the Holy Ghost. The primitive Church had the testimony of the living apostles, attested both by miraculous spiritual gifts and by the inward supernatural witness of the Holy Ghost (John 15. 26, 27; Acts 15. 28; Rom. 8. 16; Gal. 4. 6; 1 John 3. 24). The Church still has the witness of the Spirit to confirm her written record of the apostles' testimony and miracles.

33. Were cut to the heart. This is an admirable rendering, though the original is even more forcible, meaning "were (mentally) sawn asunder." The same word is found in 7. 54, where it is used to indicate the result of the preaching of Stephen before the council: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart."

34. Gamaliel. This lesson and that of next week introduce to us two characters who are not only of unusual intrinsic interest, but who, in very different ways, exerted extraordinary influence upon Paul. The great rabbi Gamaliel and the great martyr Stephen contributed important factors in the education of the great apostle. Both Jewish and Christian tradition have been prolific in stories concerning Gamaliel. There is no support in history for the claim made in the *Recognitions of Clement* that Gamaliel was secretly a Christian and remained in the council by the advice of the apostles from motives of policy. A Jewish tradition, not satisfactorily authenticated, represents him as a grandson of the great Hillel and a descendant of David. That he was president of the Sanhedrin, though often stated, is not at all probable, since until after his time the high-priest seems to have presided over that body. Confusion has often arisen from attributing to him the acts and sayings of his grandson, Gamaliel II. The Gamaliel of our lesson is distinguished as "Rabban Gamaliel the Elder," who is represented in the Talmud also as a Pharisee of great gifts and learning who was able to unite ardent devotion to the law with an uncommonly liberal and humane spirit. So high was his reputation that he was called "the glory of the law." It was said of him, "Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died there has been no more reverence for the law." But his

zeal for the law did not produce an intolerant and persecuting temper, such as his pupil Saul displayed.

36. Theudas. Josephus gives a brief description of an insurrection led by "a certain magician whose name was Theudas," who claimed to be a prophet, and, promising to divide the river Jordan, persuaded "a great part of the people" to follow him. The Roman procurator Cuspius Fadus defeated this company and beheaded Theudas (*Antiq.* xx, 5. 1). But this event occurred, according to Josephus, in the reign of Claudius, that is, long after the time of Judas the Galilean, and some ten years later than the speech of Gamaliel. The two accounts cannot therefore be made to refer to the same man without discrediting one of the writers. As the name Theudas was not uncommon among the Jews, it is thought by some that Gamaliel's reference is to one of many leaders of sedition whom Josephus refers to, but does not mention by name. It is not at all incredible that, in the turbulent times near the close of Herod the Great's reign, one Theudas should have led an insurrection and that a similar attempt was made by another man of the same name fifty years later. Josephus records among leaders of sedition four men named Simon and three named Judas. Of the twelve disciples two bore the name of James, and there was another James among the Lord's brothers. Efforts have been made to identify the Theudas of Luke with an insurgent called Simon by Josephus (*Antiq.* xvii, 10. 6; *Wars* ii, 4. 2), and with another called Matthias (*Antiq.* xvii, 6. 2-4, and 9. 1-3; *Wars* i, 33. 2-4). The last view has in its favor the fact that Theudas is probably a shortened form for Theodorus, which is a Greek name of the same meaning as Matthias—"Gift of God."

37. Judas of Galilee. Josephus makes frequent mention of this man, whom he calls the Gaulonite from his birthplace, Gamala in Gaulonitis, and the Galilean from his usual residence. He headed the revolt occasioned by the property census which, by order of Augustus, Quirinus made in 6 A. D. (*Antiq.* xviii, 1. 1). Submission to this census was regarded by Judas and his party as treason toward God, "their Ruler and Lord." Josephus regarded their heroic disdain of death as madness. Though Judas was destroyed and his followers dispersed, his sons continued in the same hopeless and fanatical opposition. The same spirit and opinions inspired the Zealots of a later time.

41. Counted worthy to suffer dishonor. This may be placed among the many paradoxes of Christian experience. It is an honor to be dishonored for "the Name," the name "that is above every name."

The Lesson Council.

Question 3. *If Christians should follow the precept of the Golden Text in this lesson, "We ought to obey God rather than men," would it not introduce disloyalty and disobedience to earthly governments? Should the precept be obeyed literally?*

Those who obey God will be loyal and obedient subjects of all right government. The will of God is the imperial rule of life. When obedience to earthly ruler, whether parent, magistrate, or monarch, involves disobedience to God we have no choice. We must obey the "higher law." God's will is above the united wills of all men. "We ought to obey God rather than men."—*Rev. George W. Brown, D.D.*

1. Undoubtedly it would, and the more corrupt the earthly government the more marked would the Christian's disobedience be. Puritanism in its incipency was disloyalty to a corrupt national Church. The American war for independence was disobedience to an earthly government crystallized into manly action. 2. The glorious company of the martyrs and reformers answered unmistakably Yes, Yes, YES!—*Rev. Clinton D. Day.*

All power that is right is ordained of God. Bad, selfish, and ignorant men sometimes tinker up laws that are not of heaven, but of hell. Such laws should be slighted by good men and righteous laws and ways be followed. In our country there is such individual freedom that one need be troubled but lightly with any unrighteous laws. Yet, as it was in reference to the fugitive slave law, so now some laws in the interest of the liquor traffic not only should be ignored, but sturdily opposed for the sake of righteousness. If earthly governments occupy positions contrary to God's truth, so much the worse for them. The precept should be obeyed literally.—*M. V. B. Knox, D.D.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

How God Protects His People.

I. BY ANGELIC DELIVERANCE.

Put in prison... temple. v. 25.

"Angel... opened the prison." Acts 5. 19.

"All ministering spirits." Heb. 1. 14.

II. BY POPULAR RESPECT.

They feared the people. v. 26.

"Common people heard." Mark 12. 37.

"Chosen the poor." Jas. 2. 5.

III. BY IMPARTING COURAGE.

Ought to obey God. v. 29.

"What the Lord saith." 1 Kings 22. 14.

"God and his righteousness." Matt. 6. 33.

IV. BY THE SPIRIT'S TESTIMONY.

So is also the Holy Ghost. v. 32.

"The Holy Ghost... upon you." Acts 1. 8.

"Not ye that speak." Matt. 10. 20.

V. BY WISE COUNSELS.

Refrain from these men. v. 38.

"No wisdom... against the Lord." Prov. 21. 30.

"Weakness... stronger than men." 1 Cor. 1. 25.

Thoughts for Young People.

Comforts of the Believer.

1. *God sends his angels to the help of the believing soul.* To what extent each of us is attended by a guardian angel we may not know, but we do know that all natural and heavenly forces are alike "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation." Prison bars may not be shot back for us; miracles may no longer be within our reach; but if we are true believers "sickness and sorrow, pain and death" are all heavenly attendants, angels sent, not only to beckon us nearer to God, but to enhance our comfort on earth and our felicity in heaven.

2. *The Holy Ghost indorses the testimony of the believer.* Never yet has there been written a defense of any Christian doctrine that may not be cleverly replied to by some skeptic; but there is no answer to a holy life. There is profound comfort for every worker for Jesus in the assurance of verse 32.

3. *The believer is comforted by his conscience.* "Obedience to the sense of duty without regard to consequences" brings delight to the dutiful; and no one can constantly obey who does not constantly believe.

4. *The believer is comforted by an audience.* Perfunctory preachers (in private and public alike) are avoided by "the people." But the faithful, whole-souled witness, if he gather not an audience which loves him, shall gather an audience of persecutors.

5. *The believer is comforted by the thought that he is suffering for Christ.* Inexpressibly dear to the heart is this conviction.

6. *The believer is comforted by the knowledge that the Prince is on his side.* The little powers of earth may be against him, but the King of kings, whose throne is exalted forever by God, lovingly watches him here, and hereafter will say to him, "Well done; enter into the joys of your Lord."

Lesson Word-Pictures.

The council is in a stormy amazement. Men that the council supposed had been snugly shut up in prison for preaching Jesus are reported to be

actually at liberty, standing in the temple too, and—a worse surprise—are teaching the people! Yes, preaching in the name of Jesus they doubtless are! Let them be seized. The council will see why its dignity is thus insulted.

And here they come at last, jostled along in the hard, greedy hands of the officers. Face to face with the council stand the men thought to be in prison, but actually out of it and preaching Jesus again.

The high-priest rises and towers in his wrath. With frowning face, with angry voice, he growls, "Did not we strictly command you that ye should not teach in this name?" What will those few feeble followers of Jesus say before this wrathful, powerful array of priests, rulers, elders, and scribes?

But O, what a consciousness of power invests that little handful! What trust in God shines out of their very eyes! What loyalty to him rings out in their tones, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

How that side of the apostles greathens and grows and towers! What grandeur it takes on! As if into the room came spirits like Joseph, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, and the three Hebrew children, and stood beside those despised few preachers of Jesus! As if angels that helped Moses, Elijah, and Hezekiah, that passed the night with Daniel in the lion pit, flocked into the room and ranged themselves all above and behind and around those few but brave disciples. What an army on the side of the right! O, how small and few, how mean and contemptible, the council-side, as if any moment it might dwindle, vanish altogether, and disciples and prophets and angels and archangels be left alone in the council room.

But what will the council do? They must do something. They are cut to the very heart because the apostles told them so plainly that they—they slew and hanged Jesus on a tree. Why, the Romans did that. No, Peter and his brethren made a lance of the "ye," and then thrust it deep into the consciences of the members of the council. O, how they scowl and shake their heads and gnash their teeth! They would like to put to death these upstart preachers. But that despised handful has powerful allies. Can these be destroyed? One man is shrewd enough to see the possible situation. Hark! It is Gamaliel. He rises. He wants the disciples set one side. Then he speaks. How calm, persuasive are the tones that you catch! How convincing his thoughts! Let the council be cautious. What if God be on that other side?

The council does not want to think so, and still they yield to Gamaliel. Only—they must beat these preachers of Jesus! Ha, as if they could conquer by whipping Moses and Daniel and Elijah! Only—what is it besides the whipping?

Can you not see the disciples turning again to catch this final command? They must not—must not speak in the name of Jesus!

Go into the temple on the morrow and see if they are dumb. And are their backs sore and stiff? They rejoice that they suffer for the suffering, crucified One! What will the council do? Which is the stronger side?

By Way of Illustration.

"We ought to obey God rather than men." When Luther was summoned to attend the Diet at Worms his friends, apprehending danger, would have dissuaded him from going. Luther replied, "I am determined to enter the city in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ though as many devils should oppose me as there are tiles upon all the houses at Worms." When he stepped out of the carriage he said, in the presence of a great company: "God will be on my side."

It takes character to say "No." I have a friend who says the first thing she would teach a boy would be to say "No." The three Hebrew children said, "We will not serve thy gods," and there they rested. They had nothing to do with the results. If the king threw them into the fiery furnace, that was his business; and it was God's business to look after the fire when they were thrown into it. They simply said and acted, "No, we will not!" Dare to say "No." We are too apt to think what the result will be if we say "No." All we have to do is to decide what is right and stand by it; and if we do not do this we are not worthy to be called by his name.—*Margaret Bottoms.*

"We are his witnesses." There cannot be a secret Christian. Grace is like the broken alabaster-box of ointment; it betrayeth itself. If you truly feel the sweetness of the cross of Christ, you will be constrained to confess him before men. A man can no more be a secret Christian than a tree or vine can keep the life in them secret by refusing to put forth buds and blossoms and fruit. If we see a tree without this confession of the life that is in it, we say, "It is dead." So when men say they are Christians, but will not confess him with mouth and by deeds, we say, "They are dead," and we say truly.—*Words and Weapons.*

Verses 38 and 39. In Abraham Lincoln's farewell speech to the citizens of Springfield, in 1860, he said: "I feel that I cannot succeed without divine aid. On the almighty Being I shall place my reliance for support. I hope you will pray that I may receive that divine assistance without which I cannot succeed, and with which success is certain."—*Raymond's Lincoln.*

Verses 40 and 41. A native converted in Foo-chow, China, said: "I want to go and tell the people of Hok-chiang that Jesus can save them from their sins." His friends tried to dissuade him, saying: "The people are fighting there all the time. They will take your head off. If you will preach the 'foreign doctrine,' stay here at Foo-chow and preach it where you will be safe." But he replied: "No, I must go to my own people at Hok-chiang. They need this Gospel." He went preaching, was caught by his enemies, brought before the district magistrate on false charges, and sentenced to be beaten with two thousand stripes. This cruel sentence was executed with the bamboo upon the bare back of the victim. I well remember when he was brought to our mission premises almost dead. I well remember the sad face of our good physician, who said, "I don't think we can save him. I never saw such terrible injuries from beating." I went to his room, thinking over some comforting words of Jesus to repeat to him. He greeted me with a smile, and said: "Teacher, this poor body is in great pain just now, but my inside heart has great peace. I think perhaps Jesus will take me to heaven now. But if I get up from this you'll let me go back to Hok-chiang, wont you?" For many days he was very low, but soon began to mend. He started for Hok-chiang, preaching to the very men who had persecuted him, many of whom were converted and became members of our church in that city.—*Rev. S. L. Binkley (Missionary).*

Peter and John probably remembered the words of Jesus spoken to them early in his ministry: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." In later days the great apostle to the Gentiles rejoiced in like manner: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in necessities, in reproaches, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." Like Moses, they esteemed the reproach of Christ "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," and gladly went out bearing their reproach. . . . The princes seized Jeremiah, beat him, and cast him first into a dungeon, and then thrust him into the stocks. Peter and John, Paul and Silas, afterward all shared his fate, as have hundreds and thousands of God's witnesses since their time. It looks not only hard that wicked men should be allowed to do these things, but it seems mysterious that God does not interfere for their deliverance. We have, however, learned that to suffer for Christ's sake is a privilege accorded to every disciple. There seems to be a double necessity for this. First, we must ourselves, even as did Jesus himself, learn obedience by the things which we suffer, and so to be "perfected through suffering." Besides, it has been proven that suffering for the truth has al-

ways been the most powerful testimony thereto.—*Dr. Pentecost.*

The Teachers' Meeting.

Master the "Connecting Links." Draw out a descriptive statement of the causes and manner of growth of the infant Church. . . . A word-picture of the lesson in four scenes: (1) The arrest in temple courts; (2) Defense before the Sanhedrin; (3) The judges' consultation; (4) The "shame" and "rejoicing." . . . The lesson may be used as a character-study: (1) Believers in Christ; (2) Enemies of Christ; (3) Undecided people. The believer's spirit is (1) Bold; (2) Workful; (3) Conscientious; (4) Witnessing; (5) Rejoicing. The unbeliever's spirit is (1) Fearful; (2) Hateful of truth; (3) Illogical; (4) Persecuting. The undecided spirit resorts nearly always to expediency. This treatment opens the way for practical application—To which class do you belong? (Condensed from the *Illustrative Notes*). . . . Analyze Peter's defense: (1) We ought to obey God; (2) God has exalted Jesus as a Prince and Saviour; (3) He has made us witnesses of this fact; (4) We cannot therefore refuse to bear testimony. . . . Or, treat it as an arraignment of the Sanhedrin: (1) God raised up Jesus; (2) You slew him; (3) God made him a Prince and Saviour in spite of you. If you will not believe us, listen to the Holy Ghost. . . . The lesson may be treated as a varied commentary on the Golden Text. . . . Note two possible results of being "cut to the heart," (1) Penitence and conversion (2) Hardening and hatred.

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 26: The "captain," 757. Ver. 27: The council, 718. Ver. 34: "Doctor of the law," 648. . . . FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 28: Prose, 7193. Ver. 29: Prose, 10177, 10178, 4157-4172, 2288-2299. Vers. 31, 32: Prose, 7133. Ver. 36, 37: Prose, 6874, 8655, 8656. Vers. 38, 39: Prose, 8102, 12059, 5837, 11822. Ver. 41: Prose, 9494.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Obedience.*

Recall the courage of the apostles as they preached before the enemies of Jesus. Tell of the surprise of the priests when they heard that the apostles were preaching again, and the manner in which they were brought again before the council. Show how faith in Jesus and obedience to him made the apostles strong and fearless, while unbelief and hatred toward Jesus made the high-priest and the council afraid.

Print the Golden Text on the blackboard, and ask the children to repeat it with you until they are able to repeat it from memory.

Show the difference between sorrow *for* sin and sorrow *in* sin. These men were "cut to the heart" by the apostles' words, but they did not say, as did the people who were "pricked to the heart" on the day of Pentecost, "What shall we do?" but they began to talk among themselves about killing these friends of Jesus.

Describe the circle of the Sanhedrin, with the apostles before it; and how the wise Gamaliel stood up before it and asked that the apostles might be taken out for a little while, while he told the council to take care how they treated these followers of Jesus: He reminded them of Theudas, who had four hundred disciples, and all who obeyed him were brought to naught. Also of Judas of Galilee [explain that he was not a disciple of Jesus], who had many followers, and as many as obeyed him were scattered.

Make very clear the point of Gamaliel's counsel—that a work which is of men will come to naught, but if it be of God it cannot be overthrown.

Peter had said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Gamaliel said the same thing in other words.



Let the children see that our heavenly Father can put it into the hearts of men to speak wise and right words at the right time, when his children need them. The hearts of all men are in his hands, and he inclined the hearts of the people to agree to Gamaliel's counsel and let the apostles go.

They went away rejoicing. Was it because they were free? No, because they had been beaten! How can anybody be glad to suffer pain and shame? Christians can, because they remember that Jesus was beaten and bruised for our sins, and suffered the deepest shame that we might have the greatest good.

Let the lesson of obedience be last in the minds of the children. It is best always to obey God.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

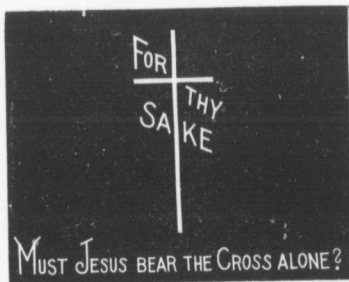
Within God's temple now we meet.
Though troubles assail.
Holy Spirit, faithful Guide.
Father, I stretch my hands to thee.
All the way my Saviour leads me.

No. 2.

Jesus, only Jesus.
All for Jesus.

Learning of Jesus.
O Guide to richest treasures.
Ready to follow God's commands.

Blackboard.



The apostles were persecuted, but they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Speak of the shame and suffering that Christ endured. It was for thy sake. Let each one of us do something for him, and say, Lord, it is "for thy sake." Closing thought:

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me."

Draw the cross long and in a single line with red; the letters in white.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Where were the apostles put by the rulers? **In the common prison.**
2. How were they set free? **By an angel.**
3. What did they then do? **They preached in the temple.**
4. Before whom were they again brought? **Before the council.**
5. What was their testimony concerning Jesus before the council? **That he was Prince and Saviour.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

33. How is the Holy Spirit an Agent?
In the works of creation and providence, but more particularly in the work of salvation.

A. D. 37.] LESSON IX. THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR. [Aug. 28.]
GOLDEN TEXT. He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. Acts 7. 60.

Authorized Version.

Acts 7. 54-60; 8. 1-4. [*Commit to memory verses 57-60.*]

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Je'sus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Ste'phen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Je'sus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Je-ru'sa-lem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Ju-de'a and Sa-ma-ri-a, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Ste'phen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every-where preaching the word.

Revised Version.

54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Je'sus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Ste'phen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And 1 when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Je-ru'sa-lem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Ju'dæa and Sa-ma-ri-a, except the apostles. And devout men buried Ste'phen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

TIME.—A. D. 37, seven years after the crucifixion of Christ. **PLACES.**—Jerusalem, and the land of Judea. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The exaltation of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

M. The first Christian martyr.

Acts 7. 54-60; 8. 1-4.

Tu. Stephen accused. Acts 6. 8-15.

W. For His sake. Matt. 5. 10-16.

Th. Undaunted. 2 Cor. 4. 1-11.

F. Suffering for the Gospel. 2 Cor. 6. 1-10.

S. Faithful unto death. Rev. 2. 8-11.

S. Ready to be offered. 2 Tim. 4. 1-8.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 138, New Canadian Hymnal.

My hope is built on nothing less.

No. 143, New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink.

No. 146, New Canadian Hymnal.

God of my life, through all my days.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 32, 33, 34.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Martyr, v. 54-60.

Why were the council angered at Stephen's sermon?

What gave especial power to Stephen in his trial?

What especial privilege was granted him?

What was his testimony in regard to this?

What similar vision did a prophet see?

How did the council vent their rage upon Stephen?

For what offense did the Mosaic law make this punishment a penalty? (Lev. 24. 16.)

Who were the real blasphemers?

What part did Saul take in this service?

What words of faith and hope did Stephen utter?

In which did he imitate the dying Saviour?
To what is his death compared?

2. The Persecutor, v. 1-4.
How did Saul regard the death of Stephen at this time?

What treatment did the disciples receive?
What tribute was paid to Stephen's memory?
What part did Saul take in this persecution?
What advantage came to the Gospel from this cruelty?

What did Saul afterward become?
Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.

Practical Teachings.

Where do we learn—

1. That heaven may open to the dying Christian?
2. That dying testimonies may lose their force with sinful men?
3. That blind zeal may lead men into cruelty and crime?
4. That the Gospel is spread through the peril and distress of the Church?

Hints for Home Study.

Compare Stephen's speech with one afterward made by St. Paul.

What is the invariable consequence of persecution? Can you mention any example?

Was Stephen's death legal, or was it due to mob violence?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. The Martyr, v. 54-60.**
How did Stephen's words affect the council?
With what was Stephen filled?
What did he see in heaven?
What did he say to the council?
What five things did the council do?
Why did they stone Stephen? (See Lev. 24. 16.)
Who were required to cast the first stones? (Deut. 17. 7.)
Where was the clothing of the witnesses laid?
What was Stephen's prayer for himself?
What did he pray for his enemies? (GOLDEN TEXT.)
What then occurred?
Whose example did Stephen follow in prayer? (Luke 23. 34.)

- 2. The Persecutor, v. 1-4.**
Who approved of Stephen's death?
What happened to the church at Jerusalem?
Where did the disciples go?
What honor was paid to the martyr Stephen?

What did Saul do?
What did the persecuted church do?
How widely were they scattered? (See chap. 11. 19.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. How we should treat our enemies?
2. How a Christian should meet death?
3. How persecution aids the truth?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

The next time Saul was present at a stoning, who was stoned? You will find the story in a later chapter of the Acts.

Can you tell what good result came to the Christians from their being thus scattered abroad?

What man received a message from Jesus out of the heavens who afterward became an apostle?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was the first Christian martyr? **Stephen.**
What was Stephen's character? **He was full of faith and power.**

Who disputed with him? **Learned Jews.**
Before what did they bring him? **Before the council.**

Who were hired to accuse him? **Wicked men.**
How did he answer them? **Fearlessly.**
What did he say they had done? **Killed the Son of God.**

Who became very angry? **The Jews who heard Stephen.**

Whom did Stephen see as he looked upward?
Jesus.

Where did he say Jesus stood? **At the right hand of God.**

What did the Jews then do? **Cast Stephen out of the city.**

How did they put him to death? **They stoned him.**

How did Stephen die? **Peacefully.**
For whom did he pray when dying? **For his murderers.**

Who encouraged the killing of Stephen? **Saul.**
What did Saul do after this? **He persecuted Christians.**

What did this cause? **The spreading of the truth.**

Words with Little People.

FAITH GIVES { Courage.
 { Open vision.
 { Love for enemies.
"Faith is the gift of God."

Whisper Motto.

"He that loses his life shall find it."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

Seven years have passed since that most marvelous of all years which men have seen—the year when Jesus was crucified, rose from the dead, and ascended into the heavens; when the Holy Spirit was out-poured at Pentecost; when the lame man was healed at the Gate Beautiful; when (probably) Ananias and Sapphira met their awful death, and only Gamaliel's timely advice saved the apostles from being murdered by the angered Sanhedrin. During these seven years the Church has grown wonderfully in numbers and influence. We read (Acts 1. 15) of its germ—a company of one hundred and twenty; then (2. 41) of three thousand converts; then (4. 4) of five thousand members. "Multitudes both of men and women" (5. 14) were afterward added; and a later record tells how the disciples were multiplied greatly, "and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (6. 1, 7). Meanwhile important changes were taking place in the secular world. Caligula succeeded Tiberius as emperor in March, A. D. 37. Pilate had been removed from the governorship of Judea at the close of the previous year. Caiaphas was deposed from the high-priesthood in the spring of A. D. 37. Political unrest made opportunity for wide-spread disorders. It was at this time, and before a successor to Pilate had been appointed, that Stephen was martyred. The Bible account of the events which led up to his death should be carefully studied—the economic difficulty in the Church, which led to the appointment of deacons, or "stewards;" the pre-eminence of Stephen as an evangelical debater; the antagonism of the Pharisees, aroused by Stephen's burning words; the alienation from the Christians of the sympathies of the common people; the arrest and defense of Stephen. Our lesson tells us how the court degenerated into a mob, and how Stephen was dragged outside the walls and stoned to death. The same flash of historic light which gives us our last view of Stephen gives us our first glimpse of "a young man whose name was Saul," destined to be the greatest of apostles. During the wild persecution which followed Stephen's death Saul is a promiscuous figure; but the persecution only increases the power of the Church.

Verse 54. These things. Stephen's entire argument, but especially his denunciation of the Sanhedrin as the betrayers and murderers of "the Just One." **Cut to the heart.** Exasperated; literally "sawn through." **Gnashed on him with their teeth.** In their fury these demonstrative Orientals acted like wild beasts. (1) *Men who "love darkness" hate the light and those who bear it.*

55. Full of the Holy Ghost. His whole being was saturated with divine power. The last verse of chapter 6 may imply that Stephen's face shone with supernatural light. (2) *The humblest Christian may be filled with the Holy Ghost. Looked up steadfastly into heaven.* Past roof and sky, he gazed into "the land that is very far off." **Saw the glory of God.** His eyes were divinely opened to see God's splendor, which Moses had seen, and Isaiah, and John, and Peter. **Jesus standing.** As if just arisen from his throne to encourage his distressed servant. **The right hand of God.** The place of dignity and power. (3) *Faith sees that on which science looks with blinded eyes.* (4) *It is a literal fact that Jesus watches us in love to-day from his seat at God's right hand.*

56. The heavens, according to Jewish belief, arose above the earth in "stories"—first the atmosphere, then the region of stars, then the residence of God. Stephen was now gazing into "the third heaven." **Son of man.** This phrase may have been chosen because it was that used by Jesus when he foretold to these very men that

"hereafter" he should sit on the "right hand of the power of God." Stephen's statement was regarded by his hearers as appalling blasphemy. (5) *Christian testimony is often misunderstood and disbelieved.*

57. Cried out. Clamored and screamed in rage. **Stopped their ears.** The dramatic intensity of this act is characteristically Oriental. **Ran upon him with one accord.** They were furiously unanimous, and could not wait for a vote. "We can judge," said Dr. Farrar, "how furious must have been the rage which turned a solemn Sanhedrin into a mob of murderers." Remember that the Sanhedrin had no legal power over life and death, but no Roman governor was now in the city to enforce order, as in the case of our Lord's trial. (6) *Anger is never reasonable.*

58. Cast him out of the city. The Mosaic law was torn into shreds by Stephen's murder, but its fragments were religiously respected by these infuriated hypocrites. He was dragged beyond the city walls to conform to the requirements of Lev. 24. 14. **The witnesses,** etc. Here was another technicality conformed to. See Deut. 17. 7. These witnesses had testified that Stephen had prophesied the destruction by Jesus of both the temple and the Mosaic law. The scene of this tragedy is not precisely known; but it was not far from the walls of the temple. There is a gate in Jerusalem still known by Stephen's name. According to custom the victim was first bound and thrown down, the witnesses who had brought about his death cast the first stone upon him,

then all who chose to do so took part in his death. **Laid down their clothes.** Their outer garments, as a man might now take off his coat before vigorous physical exercise. **Saul.** He who became the chief of the apostles. A "young man," he was probably at this time about thirty-four years of age; a native of Tarsus; a student "at the feet of Gamaliel;" perhaps a member of the Sanhedrin, and very probably one of those who had disputed with Stephen in the synagogues. His willingness to watch the garments of the two witnesses implies that he believed their story, and regarded them as carrying out the ancient Hebrew law.

59. God. The Revised Version reads "the Lord;" there is no word here in the original. **Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.** His prayer was answered; and when, according to barbaric custom, his poor crushed body was hanged in public disgrace until nightfall, his happy soul, without wounds or anxieties or regrets, was in the companionship of Jesus. (7) *Great lives are often sacrificed in the interest of truth.*

60. Kneeled down. Fell on his knees. **A loud voice.** Which never ceased to echo in Paul's heart. **Lay not this sin to their charge.** Compare Jesus's dying prayer, "Father, forgive them." (8) *"No such prayers are heard outside of Christendom."*—Hackett. (9) *Christ's genuine followers exemplify Christ's spirit.* **Fell asleep.** So "cemetery" means "sleeping-place." (10) *He who has lived like Christ will have his spirit in death.* (11) *Those apparently vanquished are often the real victors.*

1. Consenting. Taking pleasure in. **At**

that time. Immediately. **A great persecution.** "The multitude having tasted blood became furious."—*Gloag.* **All scattered abroad.** How great was this scattering and how beneficent its results may be seen from Acts 11. 19, 20. **The regions of Judea and Samaria.** Away from the mobs of Jerusalem. **Except the apostles.** They had not yet fully adopted Stephen's advanced views concerning the Mosaic law, but were still scrupulous adherents to its ritual; besides, some portion of the veneration with which the people had formerly regarded them (Acts 5. 13) still remained. Both causes would make it less hazardous for them than for some others to remain.

2. Devout men. Not Christians, but orthodox Jews. This is a notable indication of the general leaning of thought at this time. **Great lamentation.** A public demonstration of sorrow and esteem; intended as a protest of the more moderate Hebrews against Stephen's tumultuous murder.

3. Made havoc. Under ecclesiastical authority. **Into every house.** Rather, "from house to house." **Haling.** An old word akin to "hauling." **Committed them to prison.** So many were arrested that some had to lie in prison to wait their turn for trial. Some were scourged, some were threatened with death, some disowned Christ. Read Acts 22. 4. 19; 26. 9-11.

4. Therefore. The persecution ministered to the success of the truth. **Preaching.** Not only in set sermons, but by every sort of utterance. **The word.** The Gospel of Christ. (12) *Suffering becomes easy by the power of Jesus's love.* (13) *God often brings good out of evil.* (14) *The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."*

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 55. Looked up steadfastly. The word thus translated is one of Luke's favorite expressions. He employs it no less than a dozen times, while it is found in no other writer of the New Testament, except Paul, who uses it twice of the children of Israel (2 Cor. 3. 7, 13) in describing their inability to "look steadfastly" upon the face of Moses. It indicates here the fixed, absorbed, absent-minded gaze of the first martyr, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, seems already transported to heaven and indifferent to his enemies as, full of the evil spirit, they gnashed on him with their teeth like ravening wolves. **The glory of God.** The glory of God, the Shechinah, was the visible manifestation of the divine majesty in the form of a glorious light, which seems to have been generally enveloped in a cloud. Paul speaks of "the glory" as one of the peculiar privileges of the Jews (Rom. 9. 4). It appeared to the children of Israel on Mount Sinai (Exod. 24. 16, 17); it filled the tabernacle at its completion (Exod. 40. 34, 35), and the temple of Solomon when it was dedicated (1 Kings 8. 10,

11). Later references indicate that the glory continued to manifest itself between the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat until the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. One of the chief reasons why the second temple seemed "as nothing" in comparison with the first was the lack of this visible sign of Jehovah's presence. At the advent of Christ the glory shone forth again (Luke 2. 9). The eyes of faith recognized in the Word made flesh "glory as of the only begotten from the Father." The unbelieving Jews did not understand that in Jesus of Nazareth Jehovah had fulfilled his promise and filled "this house with glory" (Hag. 2. 7).

56. The Son of man standing. Jesus seems to have preferred the name "Son of man" to all other Messianic titles, perhaps because, while declaring his Messiahship (Dan. 7. 13) and emphasizing his relationship to mankind, it was least likely to encourage false hopes of an earthly kingdom. But only here in the New Testament is this title applied to Christ by any other lips than his own. The title is almost unknown in the

writings of the Church fathers. Eusebius, however, quotes an account of the martyrdom of James, the Lord's brother (H. E. 2. 23), in which James, being publicly appealed to by the scribes and Pharisees to give his testimony concerning Jesus, replies, "Why do ye ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of man? He himself sitteth at the right hand of the great Power, and is about to come in the clouds of heaven." The reason for the exceptional use of this title in both cases is probably to be sought in its occurrences in the prophecy of Jesus recorded in Matt. 26. 64. Even more noticeable is the unique statement of Stephen that he sees "the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The usual explanation is satisfactory, namely, that Jesus stands to welcome his faithful martyr.

58. They cast him out of the city and stoned him. The execution of Stephen was illegal, since even if the trial had been formally carried out and a sentence of condemnation pronounced, the Sanhedrin had at this time no power to inflict the death penalty (John 18. 31). It was murder by a mob, yet manifestly the lynchers had the approval, if not the active assistance, of the highest Jewish authorities. Yet with all this illegality the mob seemed to think they were doing God service, and observed the details of the law against blasphemers. Stephen was led without the city (Lev. 24. 14-16), and the witnesses cast the first stones (Deut. 17. 7). **A young man named Saul.** In this tragic picture, with its dark background of fanatical hate and violence, and illumined by the brightness of Stephen's heroic faith, we get our first glimpse of Saul. He doubtless belonged to the synagogue "of them of Cilicia" (6. 9), and had been among the foremost in disputing with Stephen. Hence he was prominent at his murder, and, as he consented to it, he was among those for whom Stephen prayed. Augustine attributes the conversion of Saul to the martyr's prayer: "If Stephen had not prayed, the Church would not have had Paul." Certainly his participation in this awful deed left a deep impression upon Paul's mind (22. 20), and we cannot doubt that the vision of Stephen in some measure prepared Saul's soul for his own.

60. He fell asleep. As Stephen was being dragged to the place of execution thoughts of his Master's death must have filled his mind. His prayers are well-nigh a repetition of his Lord's, that his spirit might be received and his murderers forgiven. He prays to Christ as God and receives the answer of a supernatural peace in his agonizing death. Farrar calls attention to the fact that this is "the third recorded death in the Christian community—the first had been a suicide, the second a judgment, the third a martyrdom." The sublime peace with which Stephen "fell asleep" was typical of that of uncounted saints and mar-

tyrs who were afterward to die well. A sign of the same faith in a glorious resurrection is found in the name which Christian burial places generally bear. They are "cemeteries," that is, "places for sleeping."

Chap. 8, verse 1. Except the apostles. It was but natural that the murder of Stephen should be followed by the further persecution of believers. The Pharisees had now joined the Sadducees in opposing the new sect, and Saul became conspicuous in this attack, dragging both men and women to prison. This general dispersion of the Christians into Judea and Samaria served but to spread the Gospel more widely. Few save the apostles remained in the excited city. Their exceptional conduct may be attributed to unusual courage. It is probable also that the deliverances they had already experienced, the personal friendship of a few such men as Joseph of Arimathea, and the reaction from the outbreak against Stephen would conspire to afford these leaders peculiar protection.

3. Laid waste. This is a strong word, found only here in the New Testament. In the Greek translation of Psa. 80. 13, it is used of a wild boar who ravages a vineyard. See Paul's confessions in Gal. 1. 13, and 1 Cor. 15. 9.

The Lesson Council.

Question 4. *How far was Saul of Tarsus guilty of Stephen's death? Was he wholly sincere in his persecution of the churches? Is sincerity a justification of persecution?*

Saul was a man of great influence, perhaps a member of the Sanhedrin. He was guilty in that he used his influence in favor of Stephen's death. Although in error, he was sincere, having, as he said, "lived in all good conscience before God." He believed Christianity false, and thought it his duty to crush it. Sincerity is not enough. An action is not essentially right because the author believes it to be. Conscience is rather a prompter than a guide. It tells one he ought to do right, but it does not primarily inform him what is right. It is infallible only on one point: a good conscience never approves what it knows to be wrong or disapproves what it knows to be right.—*Rev. George W. Brown, D. D.*

1. Luke charges Paul with complicity therein, (Acts 8. 1), and Paul acknowledges it (Acts 22. 20), but never charges himself with sole responsibility for Stephen's death. He uses *συνενοησάντων*, the participial form of the verb *συνενδοκίω*, to approve with another, to consent with. Since there was co-partnership in the crime, there was also co-equality in guilt. 2. He was sincere. See Acts 26. 9. 3. He never attempted to justify himself by that plea. See 1 Cor. 15. 9; 1 Tim. 1. 13. Sincerity can

never atone for wrong. God alone can justify, and that not through our sincerity, but through Jesus.—*Rec. Clinton D. Day.*

Just how much he had to do with Stephen's death we cannot tell. Something at least. In his zeal as a good Pharisee, and under the teachings of Jewish exclusiveness, he heartily concurred in the murderous persecution. There is no reason to think he was not wholly sincere. But persecution cannot be justified by one's convictions, for convictions may be wrong, and by them another's personal rights be denied. The right to each one's individual belief has taken vast onward strides since apostolic times. We know our duty better now than he did even in those times of great special enlightenment.—*M. V. B. Knox, D. D.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Martyr and the Persecutor.

I. THE SPIRIT OF THE MARTYR.

- 1. Courage.** "Heard these things." v. 54.
"Made thy face strong." Ezek. 3. 8, 9.
"Fear not them which kill." Matt. 10. 28.
- 2. Insight.** "Saw the glory." v. 55.
"See heaven open." John 1. 51.
"Things which are not seen." 2 Cor. 4. 18.
- 3. Faith.** "Lord Jesus, receive." v. 59.
"A man full of faith." Acts 6. 5.
"Access by faith." Rom. 5. 2.
- 4. Forgiveness.** "Lay not this sin." v. 60.
"Father, forgive them." Luke 23. 34.
"Pray for... persecute you." Matt. 5. 44.

II. THE SPIRIT OF THE PERSECUTORS.

- 1. Hatred.** "Gnashed on him." v. 54.
"Cut to the heart." Acts. 5. 33.
"Gaped upon me." Psa. 22. 13.
- 2. Murder.** "Stoned him." v. 58.
"Stone... put to death." Luke 21. 16.
"Swift to shed blood." Rom. 3. 15.
- 3. Error.** "Saul was consenting." v. 1.
"Before a blasphemer." 1 Tim. 1. 13.
"Concerning zeal." Phil. 3. 6.
- 4. Cruelty.** "Hailing men and women." v. 3.
"In every synagogue." Acts 26. 11.
"I persecuted the church." Gal. 1. 13.

Thoughts for Young People.

Success in Failure.

1. It is the "forlorn hopes" that win the greatest victories. Even the student of secular history perceives this fact. The man who never knows when he is defeated is sure of victory at last.

2. God turns obstacles into a stairway. "Murmurings" in the Church led to the discovery of Stephen; opposition to his teaching led to the conversion of many; his arrest led to his great defense; his death brought Saul to the front and, by strange providences, disseminated the Gospel

every-where. "Stephen failed in his defense, but Saul was converted."

3. A man often fails in this world simply because he sees the things which are invisible, and a recognition of which leads to his permanent success.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

What an impressive moment that was in the council! Stephen has been talking very plainly to his judges. He has denounced them as the murderers of Jesus, the just One. What an excitement has followed the charge! How eagerly they bend over, their greedy eyes staring, their teeth gnashing, their bloody hands thrust out toward him and working like talons that would clutch and hold and tear him limb from limb!

But what a solemn appeal he now makes to a higher Power! That face shining as an angel's is turned away from his revengeful judges, and it is lifted toward heaven. How clear and far-reaching is the space above him! How swept of all hindrances to his vision! He sees into very heaven, itself! He beholds the glory of God, and Jesus himself is standing at the right hand of God. O radiant, supernal vision! His utterance is kindled into rhapsody. In awed and solemn and tremulous tones he declares that he sees Jesus at God's right hand.

What! Does the council hear aright! O the blasphemy, the blasphemy, they think! Jesus made equal with God!

They refuse to listen. They stop up their holy ears, and then they make a murderous spring for him. They clutch him and shake him, howling and raving like madmen. They pull him this way, then that. They rush him out of doors. They run him along the street. It is a great tornado of pious wrath that roars through the streets of Jerusalem. Before this whirlwind that unclean thing, Stephen, is swept along like chaff before the autumn gale. They fling him out of the gates of the sacred city. They reach an open field. This will do for their celestial purpose. At the feet of the young zealot, Saul of Tarsus, they throw down their robes and begin their work of devotion. And Stephen, he has known all this time what was coming. He is not afraid. His face, pale yet resolute, bears the impress of one who has been holding converse with angels. On the earth, he is above it. His body is with men; his soul is with God. What can those pitiless executioners do? Amid the shower of falling stones, he cries, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" He bows lower beneath the angry, bloody, fiendish storm, kneels, once more tries to lift to heaven his pale countenance like a white flower struggling amid the wind to face the sun. With a cry for the forgiveness of his enemies, his

head droops lower still. The white flower bends to the ground on a broken stalk and dies. All over! The martyr is beyond the reach of his murderers.

And Saul, at whose feet the executioners laid their clothes, accepts this awful consecration to his bloody work. He goes out to seize and imprison wherever he can find disciples. The whirlwind that swept Stephen out of the holy city with fury descends upon the disciples and scatters them. But O, tongues of fire went with the dispersed disciples and kindled every-where a new and flaming devotion!

By Way of Illustration.

"*Being full of the Holy Ghost.*" Of many beautiful and holy persons could it be said, in the words in which Dante described Beatrice, that "God seemed in their countenances to rejoice." Yea, have we not seen those who have caught from Christ a strange, surpassing radiancy, and yet, like Moses and Stephen, wist not that their faces shone? So martyrs and those whose passion it was to do good have come to have countenances that looked like porcelain with a divine light within.—*Rev. M. M. G. Dana.*

Philosophy teaches us that all the colors of the rainbow combine to make pure white. The Bible teaches us that all the Christian graces combine to make that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Objects that are white perfectly reflect all the colors of the rainbow; so does a holy heart reflect all the graces which combine to make a perfect Christian character.

Verses 55, 56. The nearness to heaven is suggested by the word "veil." Christians, there is only a veil between us and heaven! A veil is the thinnest and frailest of all conceivable partitions. The touch of a child may stir it. It is our embodied existence, a frail mortality.—*Stanford.*

A few years ago a remarkable mirage was witnessed at Dover, Eng. The dome of the cathedral at Boulogne, France, thirty miles away, was distinctly visible, and by means of a telescope the light-house, shipping, and houses could be seen. Even a locomotive and train were seen leaving the city. If natural law could produce such a vision, cannot God give to his own visions of heaven?

When Sir William Herschel examined the nearest fixed star, Sirius, with his great telescope, the whole heavens about it were lighted up. And when the star fairly entered the field of vision the brightness was so overpowering the astronomer was forced to protect his eye by a colored glass. It was calculated that this star equaled fourteen suns like ours; and later discoveries proved this calculation was too small. If God has given such splendor to a created object, what must be the glory of

that uncreated Presence before which angels veil their faces? "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."—*Foster.*

"*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*" When a blind man comes against you in the street you are not angry with him. You say, "He is blind, poor man, or he would not have hurt me." So may you say of those who wrongfully use you.—*Spourgeon.*

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was Jesus's dying prayer for his murderers.

Verses 1. Outside of the Damascus Gate I saw the spot where Stephen was stoned into a cruel death; but that martyr blood was not only the "seed of the Church," but the first germ of conviction in the heart of Saul of Tarsus.—*Cuyler.*

Verses 4. That which to a Christian may seem a sad repulse or defeat may be God's plan for a victory. Paul was to see Rome, but when he entered that city a prisoner it looked as if the promise was a mockery, yet he soon found that coming to Rome was productive of grand results, and even in Caesar's household some became "saints." Bunyan was imprisoned and thus was prevented from preaching, but the best work he ever did for Christ was while he was in Bedford Jail. His preaching would have reached but a few. His *Pilgrim's Progress* has taught the world. When Judson was rebuffed in British India it seemed as if the door of usefulness might be closed, but forced, as it were, to go to Burmah, he lighted a golden lamp which has guided thousands to eternal life.—*Christian Inquirer.*

Captain Allen Gardiner and his six companions died of starvation on the coast of Terra del Fuego after repeated efforts to evangelize that desolate country. This led to a controversy about the utility of missions and a fresh interest in Patagonia, which did more for the cause than the devoted pioneer could have accomplished.—*Dickson.*

Livingstone's death did more for Africa than he could have done had he completed his task. From the worn-out figure kneeling at the bedside in the hut in Ilala an electric thrill went which touched the world, and is felt to-day.—*Dickson.*

The Teachers' Meeting.

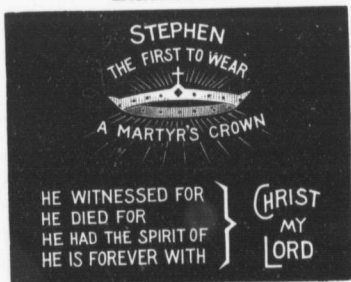
Briefly as possible, but carefully, draw out the facts which led to Stephen's pre-eminence and death. Points that may be considered (if there be time) are: (1) Palestinian Jews and Hellenists; (2) Possible causes of the dissatisfaction concerning the distribution of funds; the appointment of deacons; (3) Why Pharisaic hatred centered on Stephen, and spared the apostles; (4) The charge brought against him; (5) His defense.... The leading characters of the lesson: I. *Stephen.*

(1) "Full of the Holy Ghost;" (2) Lifted above his earthly pains; (3) Personally cared for by the Lord; (4) Full of forgiveness and charity; (5) Peaceful while in the hands of a murderous mob; (6) Leaving a precious memory; (7) Successful in his failure. II. *Saul*. (1) A leader from the outset; (2) Sincere; (3) Thorough; (4) Failing even in his success.... Spirit of the Church: (1) A spirit of equal love to all, Hellenists and Hebrews; (2) Boldness in denouncing error; (3) In harmony with the Spirit of God; (4) Gifted with divine insight; (5) Turning persecution into a means to spread the Gospel.... Incidental topics: (1) The qualifications of deacons; (2) Analysis of Stephen's address; (3) Causes for alienation of popular sympathy from the Church.

References.

FREEMAN. Vets. 55, 56: Testimony given standing, 661; the post of honor, 656. Ver. 58: The outer garment, 205; place of capital punishment, 727.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Vets. 55-60: Poetical, 4017-4019, 1473; Prose, 9554. Ver. 56: Prose, 1718. Ver. 58: Prose, 4397-4405. Ver. 59: Prose, 6103, 1348, 1356, 1363, 11827. Vets. 59, 60: Poetical, 3741; Prose, 7777; Poetical, 2252-2262. Ver. 2: Prose, 7803. Ver. 4: Prose, 7240, 9160.

Blackboard.



DIRECTIONS.—First draw faintly a straight line about the center of the board, twelve inches long, like this: ———. Then draw a curved line over it like this: . Draw the same curve underneath. Do this with yellow chalk. Rub out the faint line, and turn up the ends of the upper curved line, and you will have a fair representation of a crown. Write the words on the board either before or during the review.

FOR COLORS.—If you can draw well, take green crayon for the name of Stephen; white for the sentence underneath his name, "The first to wear;" and red for "A martyr's crown." Rays of bright yellow and violet.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. "He that loses his life shall find it."

INTRODUCTORY. Tell that we have a lesson today about a man who lost his life for Christ's sake. Recall the trial. Who was the chief of the deacons? Before whom was he brought for trial? What kind of works had he been doing? Who was killed before Stephen for doing good works? Tell that Stephen spoke bold, true words to his judges. He told them that they had murdered the Son of God, which made them very angry. See if children know who these men were. If not, tell that they were the ones who condemned Jesus. Now they persecuted Stephen because he believed in Jesus. Show that it was love of self which made them hate Jesus.

THE HAPPY MARTYR.



Tell what it is to be a martyr, explaining a little about the martyrdoms in the early Church. Recall Stephen's shining face, and ask what made it shine. Show that the shine comes through the globe of a lamp because a light is burning inside, and read from Acts 6, 5, "Stephen, a man full of faith," etc. The Holy Ghost wants to shine in every heart, and will if we let him. Tell where Stephen looked when men were raging against him, and what he saw there. Tell upon whom he called when they were stoning him, and his last prayer—for others, not himself. Ask what this shows, and teach that self-love thinks first of self, and that the only happy people are those whose hearts are large enough to love and bless even those who do them harm. Make vivid word-picture of the scene—Stephen calm, angelic, happy; the judges with rage and hate in their faces. Where were the rage and hate besides in their faces? Fix the beautiful words about Stephen's death, "he fell asleep," in the minds of the children. He fell asleep to wake with Jesus.

THE UNHAPPY JUDGES.

Talk about the Sanhedrin, and who composed it. They had plenty of money and power, but they had not love. Stephen had no money or worldly power, but he had love. Make a pair of scales on the board, and let children tell which will weigh the heavier, love or power. Talk about happiness and unhappiness, and by questions and examples lead to the thought that only love and truth can be happy. Put lesson thought on board, and let children tell who lost his life, and what he gained. The judges of Stephen saved the life of their bodies, but what did they lose? Show that we try to save life when we seek our own pleasure and way, and that we give up life—the self-life—when

we deny self and seek the truth and love. Ask children if they want self or Christ to be most to them.

Close with the Golden Text and a little talk about the heavenly beauty of forgiveness.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

'Tis the promise of God.
How firm a foundation.
In this thy time of trouble.
O holy Saviour, Friend unseen.
My Jesus, as thou wilt.

No. 2.

Forth in thy name.
Father, to thee my soul I lift.
Teach me, O Lord.
The Lord is my strength.
Jesus all my grief is sharing.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Stephen see as he looked up to heaven? **Jesus on the right hand of God.**
2. What did the council do when they heard his words? **They stoned him.**
3. For what was the last prayer of Stephen? **For forgiveness to his enemies.**
4. Who took part in the murder of Stephen? **A young man named Saul.**
5. What did Saul do afterward? **He persecuted the Church.**
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"He knelt down,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

34. Where do the Scriptures speak of the Holy Spirit in creation and providence?
Genesis 1. 2; Psalm 104. 30; Job 33. 4.

How to Secure Efficiency.

To secure efficiency in the use of the Bible in our classes we shall have to aim at higher attainments in five separate directions: (1) Competency of Bible knowledge, and especially knowledge of the Bible as in Revelation. What we want is keen, quickened, cultured insight of those spiritual revelations which, directly and indirectly, concern the children. (2) Sympathy of personal interest in the Bible revelation, which adds the personal force to all teaching work. (3) Relativity of our setting of Bible truths to the minds and thought-associations of the children. It is the law of all skillful teaching that the teacher must come down to the level of the taught in order to raise them up to his level. Precise adaptation of religious

truth to young minds has not yet been sufficiently sought. We still attempt to teach men's theologies to children. (4) It is more commonplace to speak of cultured teaching methods. Day-school methods are not altogether suited for Sunday-school work, and perhaps the absolute best method of Bible teaching yet awaits the discoverer. And (5) Skill in working for a definite end. Lack of this makes so much of our work desultory. No teacher should undertake a lesson without knowing precisely what he means to teach or impress. These he will work round and toward a definite end, and the class will carry away a positive influence.

If the ideal teacher be described, it may be said that he is one of the old prophets of the later Hebrew monarchy, working in precise adaptation to these latter days. He is this—a moral and spiritual force on the young people of his generation; and his supreme power in urging the acceptance of truth and the doing of duty lies in the skill and wisdom with which he can point to the inspired word and say, "Thus saith the Lord."—*Rev. Robert Tuck, B.A., in Sunday-School Chronicle.*

Canon Wilberforce on Education.

At the anniversary of the London Sunday-School Union in May, Canon Wilberforce said that if he were asked for a definition of education he would say, "Education is formation of character, and character cannot be formed except by moral decisions made every day, and moral decisions are made by the will, and the will is executive of the conscience, and that is God within your soul, and that has to be open to the love of the Lord, and the channels of the Holy Spirit made clear for it." That was the right work of education. The work of the Sunday-school was supplementing State education, and he thanked God it was being done magnificently by men and women, who, after a hard week's work, and when they might fairly be supposed to take a rest, were laboring with great devotion in Sunday-schools. He would impress upon teachers the importance of realizing the dignity of their office; he would ask them to believe in their "apostolic succession," not conferred by the "laying on of hands," but after the order of Melchizedek, by the secret, invisible consecration of the Holy Ghost, for if there was one calling in this world that would not bear poor, flippant, frivolous, careless work it was that of the Sunday-school teacher.

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