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ON

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FOR THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1950

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P R E F A C E

This is the fifth volume of **TEACHER'S ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY**, and the twenty-ninth annual volume published by the Gospel Advocate Company on Bible School Lessons since it was started by E. A. Elam.

This volume is devoted to a study of the establishment of the church, the missionary work of the church in taking the gospel to the whole world, and the life, work, and worship of the early church while it was under the personal supervision of inspired men. Churches and individuals are rebuked for their sins, and commended for righteousness, so we may learn what is right and be warned to walk in the right way. Teachers should not lose any opportunity to point out the right and exhort the students to follow these good examples. There is not a lesson during the year but that affords an opportunity to emphasize some principle of righteousness, some warning against sin. Teachers must not be afraid to "preach" to their classes, admonish, exhort, reprove, and rebuke.

Attention is called again to the Golden Texts which have been treated in such way as to be helpful, not only to the class teacher, but to young preachers and others who need help in gathering material for lessons to present before audiences. And do not overlook the Daily Bible Readings, for they are all in harmony with the material of the lesson, and will give the teacher a background for the lesson which is invaluable.

The church of our Lord is growing. It is going into new communities, new states, and new nations. Never before has there been the imperative need for sound gospel teaching which exists today. New churches need to be indoctrinated. Young people in old churches need indoctrination. Use of this book by adult classes will fill this need. The portion of the Bible covered this year gives the best material possible for this purpose, and it has been the intention of the writer to make use of every opportunity presented.

If both individuals and congregations are led to a better understanding of God's word, urged to greater activity in God's kingdom, and given a brighter hope for heaven, the efforts and prayers of the writer will have been abundantly realized.

THE AUTHOR

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BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Compiled by ROY H. LANIER

A

Aa-ron (enlightened), Heb. 7: 11. Brother of Moses, and first high priest of the Levitical order.

A-bib (sprouting), Ex. 13: 4. First month of the sacred, seventh of the civil, year of the Hebrew calendar; corresponding with our April.

A-bra-ham (father of a multitude), Gal. 3: 8. Founder of the Hebrew people, and father of the faithful.

A-cha-ia, 2 Cor. 9: 2. The southern half of Greece, in which Athens and Corinth were principal cities.

A-dri-a, Acts 27: 27. The body of water west of Greece, and east of southern Italy and Sicily; sometimes considered a part of the Adriatic Sea; now called the Indian Sea.

Ae-ge-an. The body of water east of Greece, and west of Turkey, and north of Crete.

Ag-a-bus (he loved), Acts 21: 10. A prophet in Caesarea who foretold a famine and the suffering of Paul at the hands of the Jews.

A-has-u-e-rus (king), Esther 1. King of Persia; Xerxes of profane history.

Al-ex-an-der (man defender). 1. Kindred of Annas the high priest. Acts 4: 6.

2. A Jew who spoke in Paul's defense at Ephesus. Acts 19: 33. 3. A coppersmith who did Paul much harm, and probably resided at Ephesus. 2 Tim. 4: 14. 4. A member of the church at Ephesus whom Paul delivered to Satan. 1 Tim. 1: 20.

Al-phae-us (exchange). 1. The Father of Levi, or Matthew. Mark 2: 14. 2. Father of James the Less. Mark 3: 18.

An-a-ni-as (Jehovah is gracious). 1. A member of the Jerusalem church who lied about the sale of his property. Acts 5: 1. 2. The disciple who baptized Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9: 18. 3. The high priest whom Paul called a whited wall. Acts 23: 2.

An-nas (merciful). Acts 4: 6. The high priest before whom Peter and John were tried.

An-ti-och. 1. A city in Syria which became the center of Christian activities after the persecution drove the church out of Jerusalem. Acts 11: 26. 2. A city in Pisidia where Paul preached and founded a church. Acts 13: 14.

A-pol-lo. The Greek god of manly youth and beauty, poetry, music, healing; the

sender and stayer of plagues; the twin of Artemis.

Aq-ui-la (an eagle), Acts 18: 26. A tent maker who left Rome on account of persecution; a co-laborer of Paul, and the teacher of Apollos.

A-ra-bi-a, Gal. 1: 17. The country east of Palestine, where Paul spent about three years immediately after his conversion.

Ar-e-op-a-gite, Acts 17: 34. A member of the court of Athens whom Paul converted.

Ar-e-op-a-gus, Acts 17: 19. The hill of Mars in Athens where the court convened, and where Paul preached his sermon in that city.

Ar-is-tar-chus (most excellent ruler), Acts 27: 2. A Macedonian of Thessalonica who went with Paul to Rome.

Ash-dod (stronghold). The Old Testament name for Azotus. Acts 8: 40.

A-sia, Acts 16: 6. A Roman province in the western part of Asia Minor; capital was Ephesus.

Ath-ens, Acts 17: 21. The capital of Attica, founded by Cecrops in 1556 B.C.

At-ta-li-a, Acts 14: 25. A coast town of Pamphylia from which Paul set sail for Antioch at the close of his first missionary journey.

At-ti-ca. A famous section of Greece, including Athens.

A-zo-tus, Acts 8: 40. A sea coast town north of Gaza.

B

Bab-y-lon (confusion). 1 Pet. 5: 13. Capital of ancient Chaldea, place where the Jews spent seventy years of captivity; and city from which Peter wrote his first epistle.

Bar-Je-sus (son of Jesus), Acts 13: 6. A sorcerer who opposed Paul at Paphos in Cyprus.

Bar-na-bas (son of exhortation), Acts 4: 36. Friend and companion of Paul in mission work.

Bar-sab-bas (son of wisdom). 1. Joseph, surnamed Justus, one qualified to be an apostle, but the lot fell on Matthias. Acts 1: 23. 2. Judas, chief among brethren in Jerusalem. Acts 15: 22, 32.

Be-el-ze-bub (lord of the dwelling), Matt. 12: 34. A heathen deity to whom the Jews ascribed the sovereignty of the evil spirits, and by whom they charged that Jesus cast out demons.

Ber-ni-ce (victorious), Acts 25: 13. Eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I, and consort of her brother, before whom Paul made his defense.

Beth-le-hem (house of bread), Matt. 2: 5. The birthplace of Jesus, a city a few miles south of Jerusalem.

Bi-thyn-i-a, Acts 16: 7. A small province of Asia Minor, where lived some to whom Peter addressed his epistle.

C

Caes-a-re-a. 1. Philippi, the most northern point of the journeys of Jesus. Matt. 16: 13. 2. A city about seventy miles northwest of Jerusalem, on the coast; the residence of the Roman rulers in Palestine; and the place where Paul was imprisoned. Acts 23: 23.

Ca-ia-phas (depression), Acts 4: 6. The son-in-law of Annas, associated in trial of the apostles Peter and John.

Can-da-ce, Acts 8: 27. An Ethiopian queen, whose treasurer Philip converted.

Car-pus (fruit), 2 Tim. 4: 13. A Christian at Troas with whom Paul left some books.

Cen-chre-ae (millet), Rom. 16: 1. The home of Phoebe, a deaconess of the church.

Ce-phas (rock), 1 Cor. 1: 12. Another name for Peter.

Chlo-e (tender shoot), 1 Cor. 1: 11. A woman who gave Paul information as to conditions of the church in Corinth.

Co-los-sae, Col. 1: 2. A city in the province of Asia.

Cor-inth, 1 Cor. 1: 2. A city of Greece where Paul established the church.

Cor-ne-li-us (devout), Acts 10: 1. A Roman centurion baptized by Peter.

Crete, Titus 1: 5. An island in the Mediterranean Sea, where Paul left Titus to work.

Cris-pus (curled), 1 Cor. 1: 14. A man whom Paul baptized at Corinth.

Cy-prus, Acts 11: 19. An island in the Mediterranean Sea, where Paul and Barnabas worked.

Cy-re-ne, Acts 11: 20. A principal city of North Africa, in Cyrenaica.

D

Da-gon (diminutive of fish). A Philistine god, with a man's head and fish's tail.

Dam-a-ris (a heifer), Acts 17: 34. A woman whom Paul converted in Athens.

Da-mas-cus (activity, industry), Acts 9: 2. The city where Paul was baptized, 133 miles north of Jerusalem.

Dan-iel (God is judge), Dan. 7: 13. A captive and officer of rank in Babylon, and the fourth of the Hebrew major prophets.

Da-vid (beloved), Acts 2: 29. Second king of Israel, and prophet who foretold the resurrection of Jesus.

Der-be (juniper?), Acts 16: 1. A city of Asia Minor where Paul preached on his first missionary journey.

Di-a-na, Acts 19: 24. The goddess of the Ephesians.

Dru-sil-la, Acts 24: 24. Daughter of Herod Agrippa I; wife of Felix the governor.

E

Ep-a-phras (lovely, fascinating), Col. 4: 12. A member of the church at Colossae, and a helper of Paul.

E-paph-ro-di-tus (lovely), Phil. 4: 18. A member of the church at Philippi, and a fellow-worker with Paul.

Eph-e-sus, Acts 19: 1. Capital of Asia, where Paul established the church.

E-ras-tus (beloved), Rom. 16: 23. 1. City treasurer at Corinth. Rom. 16: 23. 2. A fellow-worker with Paul. 2 Tim. 4: 20.

E-thi-o-pi-a, Acts 8: 27. A country in Africa, south of the Libyan desert.

F

Fair Ha-vens, Acts 27: 8. A harbor on the south coast of Crete, where Paul advised the ship captain to spend the winter.

Fe-lix (happy, fortunate), Acts 24: 24. Governor of Judaea before whom Paul was tried.

Fes-tus (joyful), Acts 25: 27. Governor of Judaea, succeeding Felix.

G

Ga-bri-el (man of God), Luke 1: 26. The angel who visited Mary.

Ga-ius. 1. A man of Macedonia, and Paul's helper. Acts 19: 29. 2. A man of Derbe in Asia. Acts 20: 4. 3. A man in Corinth whom Paul baptized. 1 Cor. 1: 14.

Ga-ma-li-el (God the avenger), Acts 5: 34. A doctor of the law, and Paul's teacher.

Ga-la-ti-a, Acts 16: 6. A province of Asia Minor, where Paul preached the gospel.

Gal-i-lee, Acts 1: 11. The northern division of Palestine, and that from which both Jesus and the apostles came.

Ga-za (strong, or fortress), Acts 8: 26. A sea coast town southwest of Jerusalem.

Gen-tiles (nations, foreigners), Acts 15: 3. A Hebrew word including all except the Jews, but used so as not to include Samaritans in some texts.

Geth-sem-a-ne (oil press), Matt. 26: 36. A place, or garden, on the western slope of Mount of Olives, across Kidron from Jerusalem.

Go-mor-rah (submersion), Jude 7. One of the cities of the plain destroyed by fire from heaven for its wickedness.

H

Ha-des (not to be seen), Acts 2: 27. The common receptacle of disembodied spirits, where they await the resurrection of the body.

Her-od. The name of an Idumaeen family given the rule over Palestine by the Caesars.

1. Herod the Great, Matt. 2: 3. The king who attempted to kill Jesus.

2. Herod Antipas, Matt. 14: 1. The king who beheaded John the Baptist.

3. Herod Archelaus, Matt. 2: 22. Son and successor to Herod the Great.

4. Herod Agrippa I, Acts 12: 1. The man who killed James and imprisoned Peter.

5. Herod Agrippa II, Acts 26: 1. The king before whom Paul made his defense.

6. Herod Philip, Mark 6: 17. The former husband of Herodias. and brother of Antipas.

He-ro-di-as. Mark. 6: 17. Wife of Herod Philip, taken unlawfully by Herod Antipas, and the woman who demanded the head of John the Baptist for her daughter.

Hy-me-nae-us (wedding song), 2 Tim. 2: 17. A man who taught false doctrine concerning the resurrection, saying it was past already.

I

I-co-ni-um, Acts 14: 1. A city of Lycaonia in Asia Minor where Paul preached.

Il-lyr-i-cum, Rom. 15: 19. The country on the east coast of the Adriatic Sea. now the territory of Yugoslavia and Albania.

Is-ra-el (he who striveth with God). Rom. 11: 26. A name given to Jacob and his posterity.

Is-ra-el-ite, 2 Cor. 11: 22. A descendant of Jacob; a member of one of the twelve tribes.

J

James (same as Jacob, supplanter).

1. Brother of John and one of the apostles. Matt. 10: 2.

2. Son of Alphaeus, and one of the apostles, called the Less. Mark 3: 18.

3. The brother of Jesus, and writer of the epistle James. Matt. 13: 55.

Je-ru-sa-lem (foundation of peace), Acts 15: 2. Religious and political center of the Jews; the birthplace of the church.

John (whom Jehovah has graciously given).

1. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. Matt. 3: 1.

2. Son of Zebedee and brother of James, an apostle. Matt. 10: 2.

3. John Mark, companion of Paul and writer of the Gospel of Mark. Acts 12: 12.

4. The father of Peter, also called Jonas John 1: 42.

Jon-a-than (gift of Jehovah). A high priest, son of Annas and successor of Caiaphas.

Jop-pa (beauty), Acts 11: 13. A sea coast town southwest of Jerusalem; now called Jaffa.

Jo-seph (increaser), Gen. 41: 40. A son of Jacob, sold in Egypt.

Ju-dae-a, Acts 2: 14. Southern division of Palestine, including Jerusalem.

Ju-da-ism, Gal. 1: 13. The Jewish religion.

Ju-das (praise), Acts 15: 32. A Christian of high standing in Jerusalem.

Ju-das Is-car-i-ot (Judas means "praise," and Iscariot means "man of Kerioth"), Acts 1: 16. One of the apostles, and the one who betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

Jude. Brother of Jesus and James, and the writer of the epistle that bears his name.

Ju-pi-ter, Acts 14: 12. A Greek god. worshiped by the people of Lystra.

L

La-od-i-ce-a (justice of the people), Col.

4: 16. A city in the province of Phrygia.

Laz-a-rus (God has helped), Luke 16: 20.

A beggar at the rich man's gate.

Lot (a covering, veil), 2 Pet. 2: 7. Son of Haran; nephew of Abraham; resident of Sodom.

Lu-cius, Acts 13: 1. A teacher in the church at Antioch.

Luke, 2 Tim. 4: 11. A physician of Troas. and companion of Paul.

Lyc-a-o-ni-a, Acts 14: 6. A district of Asia Minor including Lystra and Derbe.

Lyd-i-a, Acts 16: 14. A woman of Thyatira; Paul's first convert in Europe.

Lys-i-as, Claudius, Acts 23: 26. The captain of Roman soldiers in Jerusalem.

Lystra, Acts 16: 1. Home town of Timothy, where Paul preached on first missionary tour.

M

Mac-e-do-ni-a, 1 Thess. 1: 8. The northern district of Greece, including Philippi.

Man-a-en (counselor), Acts 13: 1. A teacher in the church at Antioch, and foster-brother of Herod Antipas.

Mat-thi-as (God's gift), Acts 1: 26. The man selected to be an apostle in the place of Judas.

Mel-chiz-e-dek (king of righteousness), Heb. 7: 1. Priest and King of Salem in the time of Abraham, whose priesthood was the type of that of Christ.

Mel-i-ta, Acts 28:1. Ancient name of Malta; scene of Paul's shipwreck on way to Rome.

Mer-cu-ry, Acts 14: 12. This was the Greek Hermes, and Latin Mercurius, for whom the people at Lystra mistook Paul.

Mes-si-ah (anointed). John 4: 25. The Hebrew term for Christ, the Anointed of God.

Mi-le-tus, Acts 20: 17. The seaport of Ephesus, where Paul met the Ephesian elders.

IVIo-ses (drawn out), Acts 15: 1. The mediator of the old covenant; the giver of the law.

My-ra (ointments), Acts 27: 5. A city of Lycia on Paul's route to Rome.

N

Naz-a-renes, Acts 24: 5. The church was called by its enemies the sect of the Nazarenes.

Naz-a-reth (branch), Luke 4: 16. A town in Galilee where Jesus grew up.

Ne-ap-o-lis (new city). Acts 16: 11. The seaport of Philippi in Macedonia.

Nep-tune. A god identified with the Greek Poseidon, the god of the sea..

Nic-o-de-mus (conqueror of the people). John 3: 1. A ruler among the Jews, and one who believed in Jesus.

O

Ol-i-vet. Acts 1: 12. The place where Jesus ascended to heaven.

O-nes-i-mus (profitable or useful), Phile. 10. A slave of Philemon converted by Paul.

P

Pal-es-tine (land of strangers). Th? word occurs four times in the King James Version, but not at all in the American Standard Version, which has Philistia. It is used to mean only a part of Canaan along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. But common usage today applies it to all of Canaan, the holy land.

Pam-pliyl-i-a, Acts 13: 13. A political division of Asia Minor, southern part.

Pa-phos, Acts 13: 13. A city on the western coast of Cyprus.

Pass-over, Acts 12: 4. A Jewish feast to commemorate the deliverance of the firstborn of the Israelites when all the firstborn of Egypt were slain.

Pen-te-cost (fiftieth). Acts 2: 1. A Jewish feast day fifty days after Passover; and the day on which Jesus established his church.

Per-ga, Acts 13: 13. An ancient and important city of Pamphylia.

Pe-ter (stone), Acts 2: 14. A leader among the apostles, and the speaker on Pentecost.

Pe-shi-to. A Syriac translation of the Bible containing all the Old Testament and the greater portion of the New Testament. It is to Syrian people what the Vulgate is to the Latin people, or the King James Version is to the English speaking people. It dates back to the second century of our era.

Pi-si-di-a. Acts 13: 14. A province of Asia Minor where Paul labored much.

Phar-i-«ees (separated), Acts 23: 6. A religious sect of the Jews who believed in angels, spirits, and the resurrection.

Phi-le-mon (loving, affectionate), Phile. 1. A member of the church at Colossae whom Paul wrote in the behalf of one of his converts.

Phil-ip (lover of horses), Acts 8: 26. An evangelist who preached in Samaria, and was sent to convert the Ethiopian eunuch.

Phi-lip-pi, Acts 16: 12. The principal city of Macedonia, where Paul preached.

Phoe-be (shining, bright), Rom. 16: 1. 2. A deaconess in the church at Cenchreae.

Phoe-ni-ci-ans. People inhabiting a narrow strip of country running 120 miles along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea beginning at Mt. Carmel; Tyre and Sidon were principal cities.

Phryg-i-a, Acts 16: 6. A province of Asia Minor where Paul preached.

Poly-carp. A disciple of John the apostle at Ephesus.

Pris-cil-la (diminutive of Prisca, ancient), Acts 18: 2. The wife of Aquila from Rome, who helped to teach Apollos the way of the Lord.

Ptol-e-ma-is, Acts 21: 7. A seacoast town just north of Caesarea.

Pu-rim, Esth. 9: 26. A feast of the Jews to celebrate their deliverance from the plot of Haman to destroy them while in captivity.

S

Sad-du-cees, Acts 23: 7. A religious sect of the Jews, thought to be followers of one Zadok, who denied the existence of angels and spirits, and the resurrection.

Sal-a-mis, Acts 13: 5. A seaport on the east end of the island of Cyprus.

Sa-ma-ri-a (Shemer's watch-mountain), Acts 8: 5. Where Philip preached; the home of Simon.

Sa-mar-i-tans. Inhabitants of Samaria, sometimes used to distinguish from Jews.

Sam-o-thrace, Acts 16: 11. An island in the Aegean Sea between Troas and Neapolis.

San-he-drin. The supreme court of the Jews consisting of seventy members.

Sap-phi-ra (either sapphire or beautiful), Acts 5: 1. The wife of Ananias, who lied to the apostles about the amount of money received from the sale of property.

Sa-tan (adversary), 2 Cor. 4: 4. The god of this world, the accuser of the saints.

Se-leu-ci-a, Acts 13: 4. The sea port from which Paul set sail for his first missionary journey.

Ser-gi-us Pau-lus, Acts 13: 7. Proconsul of Cyprus to whom Paul preached.

Si-don (a fishery), Acts 12: 20. A seacoast town of Phoenicia, just west of Damascus.

Si-las (sylvan), Acts 15: 22. A companion of Paul in missionary work.

Sil-va-nus, 1 Thess. 1: 1. Another form of the word Silas; a companion of Paul.

Si-mon (hearer). 1. Another name for Peter, John 1: 42. 2. A man converted by Philip, but who sinned soon afterwards, Acts 8: 13.

Smyr-na (myrrh), Rev. 2: 8. The home of Iranaeus, the pupil of Polycarp who was

the pupil of John the apostle; a city of Asia Minor, near Ephesus.

So-dom (place of lime), Jude 7. A city in the days of Abraham destroyed by fire from heaven on account of its wickedness.

Sol-o-mon (peaceful), Matt. 6: 29. Son of David, and third king of Israel.

Ste-phen (crown), Acts 6: 8. A gospel preacher, and the first Christian martyr.

Sym-e-on Ni-ger, Acts 13: 1. One of the teachers in the church at Antioch.

Syr-i-a, Acts 15: 41. The country north of Palestine with Damascus as capital.

T

Tar-sus, Acts 11: 25. The home of Paul, and where Barnabas found him when he wanted a helper in the work at Antioch.

Ter-tul-lus (diminutive of the name Tertius), Acts 24: 1. A lawyer who prosecuted Paul.

The-oph-i-lus (friend of God), Luke 1: 3. The man to whom Luke addressed his books.

Thes-sa-lo-ni-ca, 1 Thess. 1: 1. A city of Macedonia where Paul established a church. Now called Salonica, Greece.

Three Taverns, Acts 28: 15. The place where Paul was met by brethren on his way to Rome, 56 miles from the city.

Thy-a-ti-ra, Acts 16: 14. A city of Asia Minor, the home of Lydia.

Tim-o-thy (honoring God), Acts 16: 1. A Christian of Lystra, Paul's son in the gospel.

Ti-tus (honorable), Gal. 2: 3. A Greek, co-laborer with Paul, whom Paul would not allow to be circumcised at the Jerusalem conference.

Ti-tus Justus, Acts 18: 7. A man of Corinth whose house Paul used for teaching.

Tro-as, Acts 16: 11. A city of Asia Minor where Paul saw in a vision a man of Macedonia asking for help.

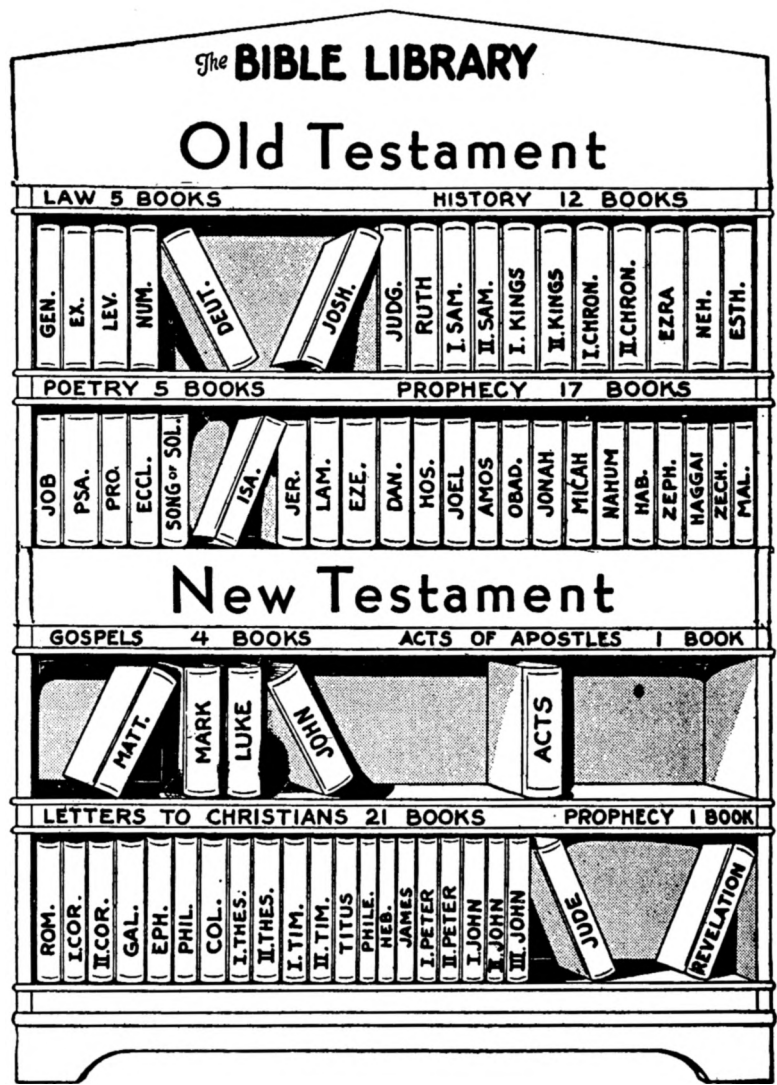
Tro-phi-mus (foster-child), Acts 21: 29. A resident of Ephesus, and companion of Paul.

Ty-ran-nus (despot, tyrant), Acts 19: 9. A man of Ephesus in whose school Paul taught.

Z

Zi-on (sunny), Isa. 2: 3. The name of a mountain in Jerusalem: and the name by which Jerusalem is sometimes called.

“And books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.”—Rev. 20: 12.



“Handling aright the word of truth.”—2 Tim. 2: 15.

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”—John 1: 17



FIRST QUARTER

LESSONS IN ACTS

First Half

Aim:—To lead the pupil to an understanding of primitive Christianity, and to beget in him the desire and purpose to live the Christian life and to win others to faith in the Lord Jesus.

Lesson I—January 1, 1950

STORY OF THE ASCENSION

The Lesson Text

Acts 1: 1-12

1 The former treatise I made, O The-oph'i-lus, concerning all that Je-sus began both to do and to teach,

2 Until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Je-ru'-sa-l6m, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he*, ye heard from me:

5 For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Is'-ra-el?

7 And he said unto them, It is not

for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority.

8 But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Je-ru'-sa-lem, and in all Ju'-dae'-a and Sa-ma'-ri-a, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Who also said, Ye men of Gal'-i-lee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Je'-sus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Je-ru'-sa-lem from the mount called 0Γ-1-vet, which is nigh unto Je-ru'-sa-16m, a sabbath day's journey off.

Golden Text.—*"And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven"* (John 3: 13.)

Devotional Reading.—Luke 24: 50-53.

Daily Bible Readings

December 26. M.....	The Ascension Predicted (Psalm 68:	15-18)
December 27. T.....	Daniel Sees Ascension (Dan. 7:	13, 14)
December 28.....	W. Luke's Record of Ascension (Luke 24:	50-52)
December 29.....	T. Received up into Glory (1 Tim. 3:	14-16)
December 30. F.....	To Appear Before God for Us (Heb. 9:	23-28)
December 31. S.....	Vision of Ascended Christ (Acts 7:	54-60)
January 1. S.....	John's Vision of Christ (Rev. 1:	12-20)

Time.—A.D. 30.

Places.—Jerusalem and Mount Olivet.

Persons.—Jesus and his apostles.

Introduction

The aim of the lessons of this quarter is worthy of consideration. The first purpose of the aim is doctrinal. It is the purpose of those who prepare these lessons to give the students a picture of primitive Christianity, of the church as the Lord made it and wished it to remain. It is the nature of humanity to depart from the original pattern, both in doctrine and in life. We need continually to be called back to the divine pattern, to walk in the way of the Lord. So let us resolve now that we will learn from these lessons Christianity as it was revealed by the Lord, and let us resolve to make the church where we worship just what the Lord wants his churches to be in doctrines, organization, worship, and life. The second purpose of the aim of these lessons is practical. It is not enough to know what is Christianity, one must practice it. So we hope to beget in each one the desire and purpose to live by the principles of Christianity, and win others to do so.

Luke, the author of the book from which all our Lesson Texts will be taken, deserves more comments than space will allow. Even if Paul had not called him the "beloved physi-

cian," we would know from the style of his writing, as he uses words peculiar to that profession. He joined Paul's company at Troas; he remained at Philippi some seven years and rejoins his beloved patient on his last journey to Jerusalem. (Acts 20: 5, 6; 21: 15.) Luke seems to have been with Paul all through his imprisonment at Caesarea as well as at Rome. (2 Tim. 4: 11.) His two years at Caesarea and his continued association with Paul gave him ample opportunity to trace "the course of all things accurately from the first" (Luke 1: 3), that he might write his friend Theophilus about the things which Jesus began both to do and to teach until the day he was taken up from the earth. His unusual education made it possible for him to use to the best advantage these ample opportunities to weigh and record the evidences of Christianity. Besides, he was inspired by the Spirit of God. The world has been enriched beyond our power to estimate by the two books he wrote. Students should use a good Bible Dictionary to learn more of Luke and of his writings, especially the book of Acts.

Golden Text Explained

1. **The Meaning of the Text.** This text is a part of the conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus. Jesus had spoken of the new birth and Nicodemus was slow of understanding, though a teacher in Israel. Jesus said if Nicodemus was slow to understand earthly things, he surely could not grasp the idea if he should tell him of the heavenly things. By the *earthly* things is meant that part of the gospel which is for man and to be done by man; while by *heavenly* is meant that which is done by the Lord in heaven and for man. One writer says the earthly is the *what* of the gospel, and the heavenly is the *how*. If Nicodemus could not grasp that which was intended for man to understand, how could he expect to understand that which was not intended for man. Only the One who had come from heaven could understand these matters. No man had ascended into heaven that he might see and understand these mat-

ters; only the Son of Man was qualified as a teacher of these things, and his qualifications consisted in the fact that he has descended from heaven, as to one side of his nature, and that he is still in heaven as to the other. Notice the tense of that statement, "Who is in heaven." As to his divine nature he was *of* heaven and in heaven; but as to his human nature he was *of* the earth and on the earth.

2. Lessons Drawn from the Text.

First, this text implies the pre-existence of Jesus. Obviously he speaks of himself as the One who descended from heaven, for he uses the term "Son of Man." If he descended from heaven, he must have had a prior existence there. Many passages of scripture teach this. (John 1: 1-4, 14; 8: 56-58; 2 Cor. 8: 9; Heb. 2: 14-17.) Next, this text implies the incarnation of the Son of God. The term "Son of man" implies a human nature, and yet he speaks of himself

as having existed in heaven and having descended. There is no reconciling these ideas apart from allowing the Son of God incarnate in human flesh. The blending of the two natures into one Being is hardly a topic of "earthly" knowledge; it is among the "heavenly things" to which Jesus referred. And though we may not be able to comprehend it fully, we can believe it because it has been taught us by him who resided in heaven and came to earth to teach us about heavenly things. The third lesson implied in this text is the superhuman knowledge of the Son of man. No man, ordinary human being, had ever ascended into heaven to be able to instruct in heavenly things; but Jesus, who had resided in heaven, and had descended was

perfectly qualified to teach us heavenly things, which the wisdom of man was incapable of finding out. It is also fairly implied in this text that heaven is a place. It is such as can be ascended into, and can be left by one for another place. If heaven is a mere state of spiritual exhalation, why had no man yet ascended there? Even David had not yet ascended. (Acts 2: 34.) We therefore conclude that heaven is as much a place as is this earth, and that the Son of God left one place and came to another. And we entertain the hope that when we leave this earth we may go to another place called heaven. The fact that one is temporal and physical while the other is eternal and spiritual does not argue that one is a place and the other is not.

Exposition of the Text

I. The Last Forty Days (Acts 1: 1-5)

The former treatise I made. This refers to the third book of the New Testament which was written by Luke. It, too, was addressed to Theophilus, about whom we know nothing. The name means *friend of God*.

Both to do and to teach. Some importance is to be attached to the order of these words, do and teach. When Jesus had done something for people, they would listen to what he had to say. And the doing of his great works convinced the people that he was a teacher from God; the works confirmed his teaching. The world will listen to the church in proportion to the works the church does. Great advertising campaigns, going from house to house just before a revival begins to invite people to hear the preacher, and other such activities will not recommend the gospel to the world nearly so well as visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, sheltering the poor, and encouraging the weak. Until we can lay aside the silks, satins, and broadcloth long enough to perform these humble and menial services for those in need, we cannot expect the world to be impressed with our message.

Showed himself alive. The commandment which Jesus gave as mentioned in verse 2 refers to the great commission. (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16.) And to these apos-

tles he showed himself alive. But not to them only, for he appeared to above five hundred brethren at one time. (1 Cor. 15: 6.) Such a host of witnesses could not have been deceived. The word *passion* means his suffering, his death. We are told he gave *many proofs*. The Authorized Version says *infallible* proofs. The Pulpit Commentary says the use of *infallible* "was quite justified." "In Greek authors it denotes an infallible sign or argument by which a thing can be certainly known." (Barnes.) He showed himself alive in three distinct ways, (1) appearing, (2) speaking, and (3) eating. He appeared, not once, but many times; not to one person, but to many. He spoke of things which were common topics of conversation with them before he died; he took up the thread of conversation which was broken by his death. No Jew of his day entertained the same ideas Jesus did with reference to the kingdom of God, hence no one could have talked to the apostles of the kingdom as he talked, and so deception was not possible. The being *assembled* of verse 4 is translated *eating with them* in the margin. The Latin, Ethiopic, and Syriac versions carry this translation. But whether this is right or not, we do know that he ate with them. (Luke 24: 43.) And he was recognized in the act of giving thanks for food. (Luke 24: 30, 31.)

Wait for the promise of the Father. The apostles were charged to wait in Jerusalem; they were not to depart from the city until they had received that which had been promised. Luke says they were told to tarry in the city until they were clothed with power from on high, and that they "were continually in the temple." (Luke 24: 49, 51.)

Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This reminds us of the statement of John in Matt. 3: 11. John said Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire, but no mention is made of the fire in this text. John's audience included more than the audience of Jesus, so no mention of the baptism of fire, the lake of fire which is the second death. (Rev. 21: 8.) This promise they had heard from him. (John 14: 26; 16: 7, 8.) This promise was to be fulfilled not many days hence. The coming of the Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2) was the fulfillment of this promise, so we may safely say that the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit; but to say that every one who receives any measure, or manifestation, of the Spirit has been baptized in the Holy Spirit is not true.

II. The Last Conversation (Acts 1: 6-8)

Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom? Evidently the apostles did not know this was to be their last conversation with their Lord on earth. They likely thought this was but the beginning of their glorious association with him in the kingdom they expected him to establish on earth. The text says *they* asked him the question, showing that they had given it some thought, and had agreed among themselves to put the question to him. The question had been construed to mean two different things. First, Lord, will you restore the kingdom of Israel, to the people who despised and crucified you? It conveyed the idea that surely he would not now give them the kingdom. Next, will you, *at this time*, establish the kingdom which John said was at hand, and which you have taught us to expect soon? There is little doubt that the last sense is the one in the mind of the apostles. They were anxious for the establishment of the

kingdom, and now that he had the power to rise from the dead surely he had the power to throw off the yoke of Rome, set the people free, and give them positions of power and influence in the kingdom.

It is not for you to know. This was a tender rebuke for their inquisitiveness about things not necessary for them to know. Human nature is inclined to be interested more in the things not revealed than in the revealed duties and obligations. He had just spoken to them "things concerning the kingdom of God," and had it been needful for them to know the time of its establishment he would have told them. Some one has said, "It is folly to covet to be wise above what is written, and wisdom to be content to be no wiser." But they were as ignorant about the nature of the kingdom as they were about the time it was to be established. They thought Christ would set up his throne on earth, give them places of power in the kingdom, subdue his enemies with a rod of iron. But time has proved them mistaken, and yet they have many followers who still look for just such a kingdom. Jesus said his kingdom is not of this world (John 18: 36), but people are slow to receive that truth.

But ye shall receive power. He would not give them the information their idle curiosity craved, but he would give them assurance of ability to do his will and their duty. The Holy Spirit was to give them the power to say what should be said on every occasion; and he was to give them power to confirm the word they preached. The Holy Spirit did not give them the power to apply the principles of Christianity in their lives. Their inspiration did not give them any advantage over us in living the Christian life. Peter practiced dissimulation (Gal. 2: 11-13), and Paul buffeted his body to keep it under subjection to the will of the Lord. (1 Cor. 9: 27.)

Ye shall be my witnesses. He assigned them a work to do. They asked about what *he* was going to do: he answered by telling them what *they* were, to do. The word here translated *witnesses* is the word for *martyr*; in fact martyr is almost the English spelling of the Greek word.

Jesus did not mean to say they should all be martyrs, but their witnessing for him led most of them to martyrdom. The field of their work was unlimited. Though it was to begin in Jerusalem and surrounding territory, they were not to stay there until every soul had been converted; they were to take the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. And they met the expectation of their Lord, for Paul could say that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven. (Col. 1: 23.) With our means of transportation and communication we have no excuse for not taking the gospel to every nation under heaven today. It is not more men and money that we need, but more consecration and determination.

III. Their Last View of Jesus (Acts 1: 9-12)

As they were looking, he was taken up. Barnes points out the fact that it is not said that the apostles saw Jesus rise from the grave, but it is said with emphasis that they were looking at him as he ascended. It was not essential for them to see him come out of the grave in order for them to testify to the fact that he arose; but it was necessary for them to see him ascend to be able to testify to the fact that he went into heaven. If he had disappeared while they were not looking at him, they could not have given testimony as to where he went. But they watched him ascend until the cloud received him out of their sight.

Two men stood by them in white apparel. Angels are often referred to as men. Compare Luke 24: 4 with John 20: 12. What men of that day would have known the things which these men told the apostles?

Why stand ye looking into heaven? Matthew Henry thinks this question, together with the term *men of Galilee*, is both a reproach and a rebuke, while Barnes thinks there is no evidence of either. The attention of these men of Galilee had to be taken

from the heavens in some way, and a question as to what they expected to gain by looking served as well as anything else. It was as much as to say to them that Jesus had done all he was going to do on earth, and that he had said all he was going to say to them, and that there was no good to be derived from looking into space whither he had disappeared. It was now time for them to do what he had told them to do—go back to Jerusalem and wait for his promise.

Shall so come in like manner. What a blessed promise! And how much it must have meant to them, though they could have no idea how soon the promise was to be fulfilled. With their misunderstanding as to the nature of the kingdom, we may well suppose them to expect the return of their Lord immediately: but as they came to understand the nature of the kingdom he established, and the work to be accomplished in the world, their expectation as to his return would be changed. Hence we do not find the apostles expecting the second coming of Jesus in their lifetime. (2 Thess. 2: 1-4; 2 Pet. 1: 14, 15.) The phrase *in like manner* refers to his going away in the cloud, so he shall come in the cloud. (Matt. 24: 30.) He will come in "power and great glory," and every eye shall see him. (Rev. 1: 7.) The claim that he has already come, but is not seen ("discerned") by any except those who have the eyes of faith to appreciate him, is too foolish for much consideration. The things which Peter says will transpire at the time of his second coming are such as cannot escape the notice of even the most prejudiced. (2 Pet. 3: 10-13.)

Then returned they unto Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives is said to be a sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem. This was about seven-eighths of a mile. It was across the brook Kidron, east of the city. It was in this vicinity that Jesus spent his last hours in prayer in Gethsemane, and it was from this vantage point that Jesus looked back over the city to weep over the impending destruction.

Topics for Discussion

1. If "no one hath ascended into heaven," what can be said for the translation of Enoch, and Elijah's going up in the whirl-wind?

2. If you were given the task of proving that Jesus ascended, what points would you stress? What would be your chain of evidence?

3. Paul says that when Jesus ascended, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. What were the captives over which he triumphed in his resurrection and ascension? And what were the gifts he gave to men? (Eph. 4: 11; Acts 2: 33.)

4. To what position and for what purpose did Jesus ascend?

5. Did the human nature of Jesus ascend or was it only his divine nature returning to God? (Acts 7: 56, notice expression "Son of man;" Rev. 1: 13; Phil. 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2.)

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Discuss two purposes of the aims of the lessons of this quarter.

What do you know of the writer of the book of Acts?

In what ways was he qualified to write a history of the establishment and growth of the church of Christ?

Golden Text Explained

What do you know of the context of this verse?

Contrast "earthly" and "heavenly" things in this context.

Why was no man qualified to discuss the heavenly things on this context?

In what sense could Jesus say he was then in heaven?

Show how the text implies the pre-existence of Jesus, and give other texts which teach it.

Discuss the incarnation as suggested by this text.

What knowledge of Jesus is suggested in that text?

What is suggested as to the nature of heaven in our text?

The Last Forty Days

To what other book of the New Testament does Luke refer?

To whom were both books addressed?

What do you know of him?

What significance is to be attached to the order of doing and teaching?

Which has the greater emphasis in your church program, the doing or the teaching?

In what way did Luke refer to the great commission?

What do you know of the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection?

What type of proof did these appearances constitute?

In what three ways did he produce this infallible proof?

What chance was there for deception in these ways before so many people?

What charge did Jesus give his apostles?

What promise did Jesus make his apostles? When was it fulfilled?

The Last Conversation

What question did the apostles ask Jesus?

What two implications could this question have? Which do you prefer?

What was the Lord's answer to their question?

What misconception led them to ask this question?

What power was promised them?

Did this power aid them in applying Christianity in their lives?

What work did he assign them to do?

To what did faithful performance of their duty lead most of them?

What success did they have in going to the uttermost parts of the earth?

Is it a greater task to take the gospel to the whole world today? Why?

Their Last View of Jesus

Why was it more important for them to see Jesus ascend than to see him resurrected?

How would these men qualify in a court of law today as witnesses to the fact of the resurrection and ascension?

Who stood by the apostles? What question did they ask?

What promise did the angels make the apostles?

Is it reasonable to think they could expect Jesus immediately?

If they so expected, what evidence do we have of a change of mind?

What do we know of the manner of his second coming?

What lessons of interest do you find in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson II—January 8, 1950

THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON

The Lesson Text

Acts 2: 22-24, 29-41

22 Ye men of Is'-ra-el, hear these words: Je'-sus of Naz'-a-reth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know;

23 Him, being delivered up by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay:

24 Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it

was not possible that he should be holden of it.

29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day.

30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set *one* upon his throne;

31 He foreseeing *this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Ha'-des, nor did his flesh see corruption.

32 This Je'-sus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.

33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Go *ye* into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Acts 2: 25-28.

Daily Bible Readings

January 2. M.....	The Origin of Pentecost (Lev. 23: 9-21)
January 3. T.....	Law to Go Forth from Zion (Isa. 2: 1-4)
January 4. W.....	The Sure Mercies of David Promised (Isa. 55: 1-11)
January 5. T.....	Joel Foretells Events of Pentecost (Joel 2: 28-32)
January 6. F.....	The Church to Be Built (Matt. 16: 13-20)
January 7. S.....	Holy Spirit to Guide Preachers (John 16: 7-15)
January 8. S.....	Events Leading to First Sermon (Acts 2: 1-21)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, in the Temple area.

PERSONS.—Apostles and the multitude.

Introduction

Before Jesus ascended he told his apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they should receive the Holy Spirit according to promise. There they tarried in obedience to his commandment. And associated with them, at least on one occasion, were one hundred and twenty other disciples. It was during this period of waiting that one was selected to take the place of Judas, who by transgression fell away that he might go to his own place. (Acts 1: 25.) Matthias was selected by lot. Selection by lot differed from voting in that it was

35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

36 Let all the house of Is'-ra-el therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Je'-sus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Je'-sus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.

40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls.

some method by which God manifested his choice; while in voting men express by voice or by show of the hand their own judgment and desire in the matter. Those who think this is an example of voting whether a person may be received as a candidate for baptism and church fellowship should consider the fact that Matthias was chosen to “take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away,” and was not being considered as a candidate for baptism and church membership.

The first sermon was occasioned by the coming of the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Spirit was accompanied by the sound "as of the rushing of a mighty wind," and when this sound was heard the multitude in the city for the feast of Pentecost came together. The people heard the apostles speaking in the several languages represented there that day, and were astonished, since all the apostles were Galileans. After explaining that they were not drunk, as the people supposed, Peter explained that the events of the day

were those predicted by one of their own prophets. (Joel 2: 28.) And then, in fulfillment of the words of both Isaiah and Jesus, the gospel went forth from Jerusalem, the law from Zion, and repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus began to be preached to all the nations. (Isa. 2: 1-4; Luke 24: 46, 47.) Those who believe this to be the same gospel preached to Abraham (Gal. 3: 8), and the same gospel preached by John the Baptist, should explain why Jesus said such was to have its *beginning* in Jerusalem.

Golden Text Explained

1. **The Field of Operation.** "All the world. John the Baptist preached only to backsliding Israel. Jesus was sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 15: 24.) The Twelve and the Seventy were sent on preaching tours, but were told not to go to the Gentiles, not even to Samaritans. (Matt. 10: 5, 6.) But in keeping with the predictions of the prophets, and in harmony with God's loving plan to save all who will come unto him, Jesus now commands his apostles to take the word of life to all, regardless of race or color. This was difficult for the apostles to understand, and several years were required to bring them to the point where they would go to the house of one of another nation. (Acts 10: 28.) And the church is still slow to take the gospel to all nations alike. Why should there be more preachers in America than in Europe or Africa if it is not because we love the freedom, physical comforts, and family connections here more than we love lost souls? People are going into eternity unprepared to meet God that we may enjoy these things, so we are enjoying them at a fearful price. What if the apostles had stayed in Judaea and Galilee with their families, instead of taking the gospel to all the world? They would have disobeyed the Lord; yes, and it may be some of us are doing the same thing.

2. **The Message.** The Gospel of Christ. The word *gospel* means *good news*. So the church is to make known the good news about Christ, and this good news consists of: (1) Facts to be believed; (2) Command-

ments to be obeyed; and (3) Promises to be enjoyed. The facts are that God is; that Jesus is his Son and the Christ and Saviour of the world; that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and was raised for our justification; that he ascended to the right hand of God where he was seated on the throne of David to reign until he makes his enemies his footstool; that he is coming again to destroy the disobedient in hell and to reward the faithful in heaven. The commandments of the gospel are that we believe in God and in Jesus as the Son of God; that we repent of our sins, turn from a life of sin to a life of godliness; that we confess our faith in Jesus as the Son of God; that we be baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins and adoption into God's family in Christ; and then as God's children that we worship in spirit and truth, serve him faithfully as long as we live, and that we keep ourselves unspotted from the world. The promises of the gospel are the remission of all our sins through the blood of Christ; the gift of the Holy Spirit which God promises to all who obey him (Acts 2: 38; 5: 32); and eternal life, an inheritance undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through their faith. (1 Pet. 1: 4, 5.)

3. **The Urgency of the Command.** Jesus said *Go*: the word is placed in the emphatic position. Do not wait for the world to come to you, but you go to the world. Why? (1) Because the world is lost in sin. Some think one is not lost until he hears and rejects the gospel, but

Jesus sent his gospel to the world to save the world. If the world was not lost it did not need the gospel. How terrible is hell? How long is eternity? How degrading is sin? One cannot think of these matters without being impressed with the urgency of going into all the world with the gospel. (2) Because the gospel is the only power God has to save the lost. (Rom. 1: 16.) If you had a medicine which was the only thing in the world that would cure a death dealing disease which was

claiming millions of people every day as its victims, would you feel the need of making known the cure in your possession? All agree it would be highly criminal in you to withhold the medicine in selfishness or carelessness. How much more criminal it is to withhold the gospel which is the only cure for sin which destroys not only our bodies and lives on earth, but the soul in hell for eternity. (3) Because our own salvation depends on obeying this commandment. (1 Tim. 4: 16b.)

Exposition of the Text

I. The Person of the Gospel (Acts 2: 22-24)

The gospel preached by the apostles was the *gospel of Christ*; it is the story of a person; it is Christ centered. So this first sermon begins by telling us about *Jesus of Nazareth*. He was from a despised city, but Peter is not ashamed of that. He was despised, rejected, and crucified, but neither is Peter ashamed of these on account of what followed.

A man approved of God. Nicodemus expressed the feeling of many Jews when he said Jesus was a prophet from God for no man could do the works he did except God be with him. (John 3: 2.) Jesus asked the Jews to believe him on account of his works. (John 10: 37, 38.) To disbelieve and reject him was to reject God who approved him. (Luke 10: 16b.)

Determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Jesus was delivered to the Jews by Judas, and to the chief priests by the mob, and to the Gentiles by the Sanhedrin (Mark 10: 33), but this deliverance means that God delivered his Son to death. The deliverance to death was by the *determinate* (defined, marked out, bounded) counsel (purpose, decree, will) of God. It "was not a vague, indistinct purpose, leaving much to accident and the fluctuating will of man; it was determinate and defined in respect of time and manner and the instruments used for carrying it out." (Pulpit Commentary.) And the deliverance was foreknown of God. This had to be so, or there was no confidence to be put in the prophets of old. Can an event foreknown by God fail to material-

ize? This question involves an absurdity, and yet it is a real problem to some. Things which *will never* happen can no more be *foreknown* by God than things which *have never* happened can be *known* by us. Does God's foreknowledge force or compel the event and the actions of men in bringing it to pass? No more than our knowledge of the motives and actions of past events could influence the men who took part in them. Peter charged the Jews with murder for doing that which God delivered his Son to suffer. God's purpose was the salvation of the world through his blood; the motive of the Jews was to rid themselves of a rival for the love and obedience of people, and to escape the embarrassment of being exposed as hypocrites.

By the hand of lawless men. The Jews did not have the authority to put Jesus to death, so they appealed to Pilate to do it for them. But this did not save them from the guilt of the crime.

Whom God raised up. Peter emphasized the fact that God raised Jesus. There are three things which Peter affirms God did. (1) God approved by miracles. (2) God delivered, gave his Son; the Jews had no power to take him, neither did the Romans, until the time appointed. (John 19: 10, 11.) (3) God raised him from the dead, and in so doing declared him to be his Son. (Rom. 1: 4.) The pangs (pains) of death are looked upon as cords which death puts around us and by which it finally brings us into its dominion. But it was not possible that the Prince of life could be held by death. It was not only contrary to the nature

of things, but it would have been to prove God untrue to his promises by the prophets which follow this verse.

II. Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 2: 29-36)

The patriarch David. David could not have been the subject of the foregoing prophecy for David had not ascended; and the proof was in the fact that his grave was still here.

Knowing that God had sworn to him. Being a prophet enabled David to see things in the future and to speak of them. And, too, God had sworn to David that of his seed, or posterity, one would be raised up to sit on his throne. This refers to the oaths recorded in Psalm 89: 3, 4, 35-37; and the record of the event is found in 2 Sam. 7: 11-16. According to Peter's interpretation this promise was fulfilled, and these oaths carried out, when Jesus was raised from the dead and was placed on the right hand of God to reign. But according to many modern interpreters these scriptures have not been fulfilled yet.

Would set one upon his throne. The word *set* refers to David. God swore with an oath that of David's loins he would raise up one to sit on David's throne. This could not have had its complete fulfillment in Solomon, for Peter says, "He foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ." And the *raising up to sit on the throne of David* must have a close connection with the resurrection. To say that he raised him up in A.D. 30 to sit on the throne of David several thousands years later hardly makes good sense.

He was not left unto Hades. Hades is the unseen abode of departed spirits whether good or bad. Both Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16) went to Hades. Jesus went to Hades while his body was in the grave. This David foretold in Psalm 16.

Whereof we all are witnesses. Here Peter includes at least the other apostles, and perhaps the one hundred and twenty, with himself as witnesses of the fact that Jesus arose. He did not claim that they saw him rise from the grave, as no doubt would have been the case if this record were an imposition, or as Peter would if he had been trying to deceive the people and make them be-

lieve what he knew did not happen. And the fact that a great number of people could testify to the fact had its weight. Furthermore there was an open grace not very far from them which called for an explanation. The story put out by the rulers that the disciples stole away his body (Matt. 28: 12, 13) while the guards slept was not very satisfactory to thinking people. The fact that unlearned men were talking in foreign language and declaring they did it by the power of the Holy Spirit; and the added fact that there were tongues like fire sitting on each of them at that very moment gave weight to what Peter was saying. Furthermore, what interest could these simple men from Galilee have in deceiving the people? There was neither honor, money, nor saving of face to be gained by them. Their story was simple, straightforward, in harmony with prophecy, and backed by things which appealed both to the eyes and ears of the people.

Being by the right hand of God exalted. He was despised and rejected by the people, but exalted by the Father. And in proof of his presence with the Father the Holy Spirit was poured out. *Which ye see and hear.* The people could see the tongues like fire sitting on each speaker; and they could hear the apostles speaking in foreign tongues by the power of the Spirit. Jesus said this Spirit would not be given until he was glorified (John 7: 39), and now that the Spirit had been given, Peter was safe in concluding that he had been glorified.

Sit thou on my right hand. Of some one this had been said by David. But that it could not apply to David was evident because he had not ascended into heaven. Furthermore David said it applied to his Lord. The Lord (the Father) said unto my Lord (Jesus Christ). If it was the Lord of David who was to sit on the right hand of the Lord, the Father, it must refer to the Messiah, and so all Jews admitted. But they had difficulty in understanding it, for they did not understand that the Messiah was to be divine. When Jesus asked them how the Messiah could be both the son and Lord of David, they could not answer. (Matt. 22: 42-46.) He was

David's son according to the flesh, and he was David's Lord according to the eternal Spirit which tabernacled in his flesh. (Rom. 1: 3, 4.)

Let all the house of Israel know. This is Peter's conclusion. Again he reminds them of the fact that they crucified Jesus, but that God made him both Lord (King, Ruler) and Christ (Messiah, Anointed). God **hath made** him Ruler, King. If he is a King, he has a kingdom; if he has a kingdom, it must be the one John the Baptist said was at hand. If he is a king and has a kingdom, he must have a throne; and if he has a throne, it must be the one which was promised to him—"The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." (Luke 1: 32.) Since he was promised the throne of David, and he was raised to sit on David's throne, and since he is to sit there until he makes all his enemies his footstool, and the last enemy to be conquered is death, we may safely conclude that he is on the throne of David now, and will be until the resurrection when death will be subdued.

III. Results of the Sermon (Acts 2: 37-41)

They were pricked in their hearts. Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit to the apostles to convict the world of sin. (John 16: 7-11.) He promised that when the Spirit came he would come **speaking**. (John 16: 13-15.) Hence we conclude that the Holy Spirit was to come to the apostles to convict the world of sin by speaking. The Spirit did not come to the people to be convicted, but came to the men who were to do the speaking, hence the convicting was to be done by speaking. The Spirit gave the apostles the word to say, and when the people heard the words, they were pricked in their hearts, they were convicted of their sins. Peter accused them of sin; he proved his accusations to the satisfaction of many; and as many as were convinced of their sin were pricked in their hearts.

Repent ye, and be baptized. The people asked what to do for remission of sins, or Peter missed the point of the question, and failed to answer their question, because he

told them something to do for the remission of sins. He told them to do two things for the remission of sins. (1) Repent, turn from sin. It is said that the people of Nineveh repented (Matt. 12: 41), and in Jonah 3: 10, we read, "They turned from their evil way." (2) Be baptized. This is the next thing Peter told these believers to do for the remission of sin. This finds no place in the preaching of the modern denominations, but it can never be taken out of the first sermon the Holy Spirit ever gave to gospel preachers.

Unto the remission of your sins. "In order to the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26: 28; Luke 3: 3), we connect naturally with both the preceding verbs. This clause denotes the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized." (Hackett, a great Baptist scholar) And Henry Thayer translates the phrase, "to obtain forgiveness of sins," in his Lexicon, p. 94.

The gift of the Holy Spirit. This means the Holy Spirit as a gift, as the expression **gift of eternal life** means eternal life as a gift. Peter taught that if believers would repent and be baptized, they would receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. He said God gives the Spirit to all who obey him. (Acts 5: 32.) Hence to believe, repent, and be baptized in the name of Christ is the obedience one must render to receive the Holy Spirit. Many are perplexed about this when they read that Cornelius received the Holy Spirit before baptism, but his was clearly an exceptional case and for very definite reasons. It will be well for the reader to turn now to Lesson X and learn why Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit before he was baptized in water.

They that received his word. As many as received Peter's word, teaching, were baptized. Those who refused to be baptized did not receive Peter's word; and those who refuse to be baptized today reject Peter's word. And those who reject Peter's word, reject Christ and the Father who sent him. (Luke 10: 16.) Those who received the word and were baptized were added **unto them**, the church. Since the church is the family of God (1 Tim. 3: 15), these people were added to God's family;

they became children of God. If they had to believe the gospel, repent of their sins, and be baptized in the

name of Christ to be added to the family of God, so must people do today.

Topics for Discussion

1. This first gospel sermon may well be taken as a pattern for present-day sermons. Peter did not talk about corruptions in government, though he had plenty of material; he did not agree to stay off of controversial subjects, though he might have gained favor of the leaders of religion by doing so; nor did he say that the religion of his fathers was good enough for him. He preached Christ crucified, buried, raised, and exalted.

2. Peter convicted men of sin by pointing out their sins. This is the hard way, but it happens to be about the only way it can be done. People today, even some church leaders, are opposed to the preacher getting too pointed in the pulpit about sins,

and especially the besetting sins of the church members. We need more Elijahs and Johns who will cry out against sin, but who in the spirit of love and consideration can be as gentle with the sinner as a nurse when she cherishes her own child. (1 Thess. 2: 7.)

3. The church of Christ in Jerusalem was composed of those people who were convicted of sin when they believed in Christ, who repented of their sins, and who were baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins; and those who refused to do these things still belonged to the devil and were on his side. That same thing is true of the church in any given community today.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Where were the apostles commanded to wait for the Holy Spirit?

How many disciples were associated with them?

What was done about the position vacated by Judas?

What is the difference between voting and casting lots?

What physical phenomena accompanied the coming of the Holy Spirit?

What did the people think? What was Peter's explanation?

What did Isaiah and Jesus say about the beginning of the gospel?

Golden Text Explained

To whom did John and Jesus preach?

What is the field of work according to the great commission?

Did the apostles immediately enter fully into this field?

Why are there more preachers in America than in foreign countries?

What is the meaning of the word gospel?

Of what is the gospel of Christ composed?

What are the cardinal facts of the gospel?

What are the commandments of the gospel?

Name some outstanding promises of the gospel.

What is the first word in the great commission that demands action?

Discuss the reasons why we should go to all the world.

The Person of the Gospel

Who is the central person of the gospel?

In what way was Jesus approved of God?

What is meant by determinate counsel of God?

Can you harmonize the foreknowledge of God with the freedom of man's will?

Does God's foreknowledge of man's sin lessen man's guilt?

Through whom did the Jews crucify Jesus?

What three things did Peter affirm God did for Jesus?

What is meant by the pangs of death?

Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus

Why was not David the subject of the prophecies in this sermon?

What did God swear to David? Can you locate the scriptures?

Did Peter teach that these prophecies have been fulfilled? Has God made good his oath to David?

On whose throne did God place Jesus?

What had to be done before Jesus could be set on David's throne?

Where was Jesus while his body was in the grave?

Set forth the accumulated evidence which Peter gave for the truth of his sermon.

What position does the exalted Jesus now occupy?

Why does the Psalm about sitting on the right hand of God not apply to David?

How did Peter conclude his sermon?

Results of the Sermon

What is the meaning of "pricked in their hearts?"

How are people convicted of sin?

What were people told to do for the remission of their sins?

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit?

What must people do to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?

What is meant by receiving the word?

What is the penalty for rejecting the word?

Who were added to the church? What is the church to which they were added?

Can one be a member of that church without being in a denomination?

Read and discuss as time will allow the Topics for Discussion.

Lesson III—January 15, 1950

A MIRACLE OF HEALING

The Lesson Text

Acts 3: 1-11

1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.

6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Je'sus Christ of Naz'-a-reth, walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength.

8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Sol'-o-mon's, greatly wondering.

Golden Text.—*"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed."* (Mark 16: 20.)

Devotional Reading.—Acts 3: 16-18.

Daily Bible Readings

January 9. M..... Great Blessings Promised (Isa. 35: 3-10)
 January 10. T..... One Identification of Messiah (Matt. 11: 1-6)
 January 11. W..... Apostles Empowered to Heal (Matt. 10: 1-15)
 January 12. T..... Power Given By Apostles (Acts 8: 14-24)
 January 13. F. Proof of God's Approval (Heb. 2: 1-4)
 January 14. S..... Power to Heal not Always Used (2 Tim. 4: 11, 20)
 January 15. S..... Other Miraculous Powers (1 Cor. 12: 4-11)

Time.—A.D. 30.

Place.—Jerusalem, Temple area.

Persons.—Peter and John, the lame man, and a multitude.

Introduction

The power to heal the physical body was not given primarily for the alleviation of human suffering; nor did the apostles use the power to heal when there was no spiritual interests to be served by its use. It is generally understood that Luke accompanied Paul that he might give him the care and attention that only a physician could give. But since Paul had the power to heal, and so did some of his associates, why the attending

physician? Again, Paul left one of his helpers sick at Miletus. (2 Tim. 4: 20.) Since he needed this man in his work, why did he not heal him and take him along? It is obvious that the apostles did not use this power except for the confirmation of the gospel they preached.

People who claim to have the power to heal today usually select the object on which they practice their healing

art. Stomach trouble, headaches, and things of like nature; and the removing of crutches from people who could do without them in most any-time of intense excitement, make up the list of so-called miraculous cures. But where is the set of false teeth that has been replaced with a set of

natural teeth miraculously given? Where is the glass eye that has been replaced by a new flesh and blood eye? Does it require any more power to replace teeth and eyes than it does to take people off their crutches, or to heal a headache, or stomach trouble?

Golden Text Explained

1. **Primary Work.** The first duty of the apostles and the early church was to preach the gospel. In the statements of the great commission it is clear that preaching the gospel to every creature was of first importance. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save men. (1 Cor. 1: 21.) The working of miracles was a secondary matter. But there are preachers today whose primary object is to effect cures. It is the prominent thing in their advertising, and it is featured in their public gatherings. It is attractive; they can make a good show when they can excite a cripple to take a few steps without crutches. But the apostles were not anxious to call attention to themselves. They desired only to call attention to Jesus who could save people from sin, who could cure their souls. So our text says they went forth, and preached everywhere. The fact that the text says the word was confirmed by the signs that followed, proves that the preaching was first, and the signs were second, both in time and importance. Again, Paul said these miraculous powers would cease. (1 Cor. 13: 8-12.) But nowhere do we read that the preaching of the gospel is to cease as long as time lasts. As long as there are souls to save, so long will it be necessary to preach the gospel. From this we conclude that preaching was their primary work, while the working of miracles was a secondary matter. And, too, Paul told the church at Corinth he had rather speak five words so as to instruct others than to speak ten thousand words in a foreign tongue by miraculous power. (1 Cor. 14: 19.) Teaching people the gospel is worth a lot more than making a show with miraculous power. And since miraculous powers could be had and used in his day, he suggested that they desire such powers, but told

them there was a "more excellent way," something of greater value, and then gave us the great chapter on love which he said is worth more than all miraculous powers. (1 Cor. 12: 31; 13: 1ff.)

2. **Signs Confirm the Word.** Our text says the Lord worked with the apostles in that he confirmed the truth of their preaching by giving them power to work miracles. He would not give a false teacher the power to work a miracle, for if he should do that, God would be a party to the sin of teaching something false. So when preachers today claim they can heal by the power of God, all we need to do to check on them is to compare their teaching with the gospel. If their teaching is not in harmony with the Bible, God is not working with them. God will not, cannot, work with any teacher of false doctrines. If a false teacher actually effects cures, he does it by power from some other source than God.

3. **Miraculous Powers Ceased.** Jesus said signs shall accompany those that believe. (Mark 16: 17.) All believers? And as soon as they believe? No! Philip went to Samaria to preach and confirm his preaching with signs. (Acts 8.) People believed his preaching and were baptized in obedience to it. Did they without further conditions receive the power to work miracles? No. The apostles Peter and John went down to pray for them and lay their hands on them that they might receive this power. (Acts 8: 14, 17.) Then we read that Simon "saw that through the laying on of apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given" so as to enable people to work miracles, he said to the apostles, "Give me also this power." From this we conclude that belief was not the sole condition of receiving this power. But one must be a believer and in addition have apostles' hands

laid on him. So when the last apostle died, there was no one to give the believer the power to work a miracle. And when the last person on whom the last apostle laid hands had died, there was no one on earth to work a miracle. And since there are no apostles on earth today with the power to give people the ability to work miracles, we conclude that there is no one on earth today who has the power to work a miracle. But what about the multitude of testimonies of honest people who have said they have been cured? Christian Scientists print many testimonies, and think it strange if we do not believe

them. But the Mormons print as great a list which the Christian Scientists will not receive. If he will not receive the Mormon testimony, why should he expect us to receive his testimony? And the Catholic Church prints as long a list of testimonies as either of the others, and refuses to believe any of the others. Smaller sects make as great claims as either of these mentioned, but no one of them will accept the testimonies of the other, though one has as good evidence that his work is genuine as the other. As long as they reject each other, we may with good ground reject them all.

Exposition of the Text

I. The Sufferer (Acts 3:1-3)

Peter and John were going up. These men had been associates in business (Luke 5: 10), and now we find them working together for the Lord. They went to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour, which was three o'clock in the afternoon. To what extent these men entered into the ceremonies we cannot know. They knew the sacrifices of the temple were fulfilled in Christ and no longer had any connection with the forgiveness of sins. They were deeply religious, so they prayed; the gathering of so many people would give them an opportunity to speak and associate with many, so they went. They did not get too busy with church activities that they forgot to pray. Preachers sometimes get so busy with material affairs of the church that they neglect their own soul culture.

Lame from his mother's womb. The apostles did not pick a man who had a headache, or some stomach trouble. Neither did they select one who had been a cripple for a short time. This man had been a cripple all his life. They did not select one who was unknown to the people.

At the door of the temple called Beautiful. This was a public place and at an hour when many people were thronging the place. It is difficult to determine just what gate this was and its location. One authority says it is the gate which led from the court of the women into the court of Israel. "But the wonder of all was the great eastern gate leading

from the court of the women to the upper court. This seems to have been the pride of the temple area—covered with carving, richly gilt, having apartments over it, more like the Gopura of an Indian temple than anything else we are acquainted with in architecture. It was also in all probability the one called the 'Beautiful Gate' in the New Testament." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) Both Barnes and Hackett think it was the gate which led from the court of the Gentiles into the court of the women. It is sufficient for us to know that it was a very public place, and that many people were there at the time.

To *ask alms of them.* This beggar had good business judgment. Lazarus was laid at the rich man's gate, but it was only one man's gate. This man chose a gate where thousands of people passed several times daily. When people were going to pray, or coming from prayer, they would be in the best frame of mind possible for giving alms. The rabbis taught and urged the duty of giving alms. Lightfoot tells us that one saying among the rabbis was that God allowed the poor to exist that the rich might earn a place in heaven. With such teaching in their minds as they left the place of worship, we can understand why a beggar would choose to sit beside the path which led from the temple.

Seeing Peter and John. The beggar did not know these men, but as they undoubtedly made a neat and clean appearance as Christian leaders would, he asked alms of them.

II. The Cure Effectuated (Acts 3: 4-7)

Peter, fastening his eyes upon him. Peter both acted and spoke in such way as to gain the attention of the cripple. Peter said, Look on us. But when the people would give them more credit than was due them as men, he said, "Why fasten your eyes on us, as though by our power or godliness we made him to walk?" (Verse 12.) Though Peter did not want praise for his work, it would have been worthless and foolish for him to heal the man without getting the attention of the man sufficiently for him to know by whom he was healed.

Expecting to receive something. When Peter asked the man to look at him, the man's hopes were raised greatly. He had every right to expect that Peter was about to give him money. Jews even sounded trumpets to call attention of people to their almsgiving. (Matt. 6: 2.)

Silver and gold have I none. Peter and John controlled considerable amounts of money laid at their feet for the care of the poor in the church. When Peter said he had neither silver nor gold he was speaking of his own possessions. No doubt he had put whatever possessions he had into the common fund out of which most of the church lived at that time.

What I have, that I give. The poor of this world often get the idea they can do nothing, because they have no money. It takes money to do some things in the church; it cannot be cared for properly without money. But there are so many things that can be done without money that there is little excuse for one to hesitate on account of poverty. Next, what Peter had to give was better than money, and there are a lot of things in this world which are far better than money. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. (Prov. 22:

1.) The word of God which we can give to others is worth more than much fine gold. (Psalm 19: 10.) Sympathy, kindness, personal service in times of sorrow and sickness are often worth more, and more desired by people, than money. Next, we should remember that what we have is from God, and we are obligated to use whatever it is for his glory. To fail to use that with which God has

endowed us is to put ourselves in the class with the one-talent man who was punished for his refusal to use his master's money.

In the name of Jesus. Peter did not wish to detract from the glory of Jesus and take any of the credit for what was about to happen. To do a thing "in the name of Jesus" is to do it by the authority of Jesus. And to state by whose authority we do a thing is to call attention to the dignity and authority of that person. This was Peter's opportunity to bring glory and honor to the name of Jesus, as well as to bring a blessing to the man.

He took him by the right hand. There was first the command to walk, and next the encouragement to secure action on the part of the cripple. Not knowing Peter, the cripple might well have thought some one was trying to have fun at his expense. But the sincerity of Peter and the encouragement given by extending his hand, caused the man to obey the summons to walk.

Immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength. God did not give the strength until the man had complied with the command to walk. If the man had argued that his condition made it impossible for him to obey the command, and therefore he would not make an effort, he would have rejected the blessing Peter offered. So one must have enough faith today to lay hold of the promised blessing. We must have an active faith which responds to God's commandments. If we argue that the promised blessings are beyond our reach, all the while refusing to go forward obediently, we will reject the offered blessing. We should notice, too, that this cure was *immediate*. Long hours of prayer and agonizing were no part of this cure. Nor was this a gradual cure. Some people think they have been cured miraculously when the change from poor health to good health was extended over a period of months or even years. They attribute to a miracle that which was accomplished through natural processes. Others think they are cured only so long as their faith continues; if they lose faith in the healing, they relapse. Peter called the condition of this man

"perfect soundness" (Verse 16); he was perfectly whole, in as good condition as if he had never been a cripple. We might as well expect any unbeliever to become a cripple as to think this man would relapse if he ceased to believe. This idea of relapse on account of failing faith is simply an excuse for the hypocritical healer whereby he hopes to keep ignorant people from learning that he is a fraud.

III. Effect of the Cure (Acts 3: 8-11)

And leaping up. We have first the effect of the cure on the man himself. He showed his faith in Christ, and in the servants of the Lord, in that he did what they told him to do. Next, he evidenced the blessing he had received. If he had returned to his place by the gate, no one would have known about his cure, and the Lord would not have been glorified. But by leaping and walking among the people he advertized the fact that he had been cured, and this brought more and more glory to God. When Jesus drove the demons out of a man, he told him to go tell his friends about the cure. (Mark 5: 19.) So when we receive blessings, we are to tell others. "Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so." (Psalm 107: 2.) Next, verse 11 says he held Peter and John. He was grateful to them, and wished to point out them as his benefactors. It is well that we manifest as well as express our appreciation for the services rendered us by others.

And praising God. Knowing that the cure was from God through Peter and John, the man gave praise to God. How much we are obligated to God to praise and thank him for all the wonderful things he has done for us! Paul begs us by the mercies of God to give our bodies a living sacrifice to God. (Horn. 12: 1.) "Oh

give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; for his loving kindness endureth for ever." (Psalm 107: 1.) Only base ingratitude can keep us from thanking God for his blessings, and praising him for his daily manifestations of goodness.

And all the people saw him. Now we have related the effect which this cure had on the people who saw him walking and leaping, and heard him praising God for his cure.

They took knowledge of him. This suggests that they gave the matter some attention. They recognized this man walking and leaping as the man they had known for a long time to be a cripple, and whose place of begging alms was at the Beautiful Gate. Luke says this was a matter of knowledge, not sentiment. It was also a matter of knowledge that there was no connection between this man and the apostles; he had not been "planted" there by them to fake a cure. Those who deny the apostles had power to work miracles are hard pressed to account satisfactorily for many facts in this case.

Filled with wonder and amazement. The words here used suggest "a violent emotion of awe, or admiration, or astonishment." The evidence of the presence and working of God was too strong for them to doubt.

In the porch that is called Solomon's. This porch was a covered colonnade or passageway on the east side of the temple. Some think it was called Solomon's because it was a part of the temple built by Solomon which had never been destroyed. And Lightfoot says the Jews often referred to the whole of the court of the Gentiles when they spoke of Solomon's porch. It must have been a common gathering place, and must have been capable of accommodating large crowds.

Topics for Discussion

1. As Simon of Samaria amazed the people with his sorcery to impress the people that he was some great one, we need not be surprised that there are people on earth today who get great satisfaction from posing as instruments of God to effect physical cures.

2. The power to work miracles is insignificant compared to the ability

to preach the gospel. Miracles never saved a soul; they only confirmed the truth which has the power to save the soul.

3. Now that the truth has been amply confirmed to produce the faith in our hearts, there is no further need for miraculous power. There is no spiritual blessing the soul needs which cannot be gained through a knowl-

edge of the gospel. One gospel preacher is worth more to the world than all the would-be healers, even if they could do what they claim.

4. To use what one has for the happiness of others and the glory of God is our greatest duty and highest

privilege; to neglect or refuse so to do brings the greatest curse of heaven upon us. But the temptation and tendency of humanity to do this is most common among us. It will probably be the cause of more lost souls than any other thing.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Give reasons why miracles were not used for physical comfort.

Contrast so-called miracles of today with those of Jesus and his apostles.

Golden Text Explained

What was the primary work of the apostles?

What is the purpose of preaching? What the purpose of miracles?

Name and discuss reasons given why preaching was more important than miracles.

How may we determine whether a teacher's miracles are of God?

Were all believers able to perform miracles?

What believers were able to perform miracles?

What evidence do we have that miracles have ceased?

What importance is to be attached to the fact that people testify that they have been healed?

The Sufferer

How long had Peter and John been associated with each other?

Why were they going to the temple? And at what hour?

How may preachers and teachers get too busy for their own good?

How long had this man been lame? Of what importance is this fact?

What do you know of the Beautiful Gate?

How did this beggar show good business judgment?

What about the appearance of Peter and John that might suggest they could help the man?

The Cure Effected

How did Peter gain the attention of the cripple? Why?

Did Peter's action give the man encouragement?

Did Peter have access to money to help the man?

Is one excused from doing good because he has no money?

What in your estimation is worth more than money?

What obligation do we have with reference to that which we possess?

What is meant by doing a thing in the name of Jesus?

How did Peter encourage the man to respond to his command?

To what extent did the man have to respond before he got the blessing?

How long did it take to effect this cure?

How was the man's condition described?

Was there danger of relapse?

Why do modern healers (?) say a relapse may occur if one's faith fails?

The Effect of the Cure

How did the man show his faith in the power of Jesus to heal?

How did he give evidence of his blessing?

How can we evidence our blessing?

What of our responsibility to God to tell others of his goodness?

What is suggested by this lesson as to our duty to praise God?

What is suggested by the fact that the people took knowledge of this man's healing?

What points in this lesson would you stress if you were using it to prove to an infidel that the apostles could really work miracles?

What do you know of Solomon's porch?

Discuss Topics for Discussion as time permits.

Lesson IV—January 22, 1950

PETER AND JOHN THREATENED

The Lesson Text

Acts 4: 13-22

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Je'-sus.

14 And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded

them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Je'-ru'-sa-lem; and we cannot deny it.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten

them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Je'-sus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye:

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

21 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.

22 For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought.

Golden Text.—*"But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5: 29.)

Devotional Reading.—Acts 4: 5-12.

Daily Bible Readings

- January 16. M..... Forewarned of Persecution (Matt. 10: 16-23)
- January 17. T..... Help in Time of Persecution (Luke 12: 1-12)
- January 18. W..... Stephen Under Persecution (Acts 6: 8-15)
- January 19. T..... Great Persecution Started (Acts 7: 54; 8: 3)
- January 20. F..... James and Peter Persecuted (Acts 12: 1-19)
- January 21. S..... Suffering of Paul (2 Cor. 11: 22-33)
- January 22. S..... Persecution for All (2 Tim. 3: 1-13)

Time.—A.D. 30.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Peter, John, and Jewish rulers.

Introduction

Among the last things Jesus said to the apostles before his betrayal we find his warnings of persecution. He reminded them that they were not of the world, but had been chosen out of the world, and that the world would hate them, even as it had hated him. "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you . . . but all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." (John 15: 20, 21.) It is significant that persecution of faithful prophets and preachers has usually come from religious leaders. Unfaithful prophets were never persecuted, because their messages were always what they knew the people wanted. Faithful prophets were persecuted because their message usually condemned the leaders of religion in their day. People usually are what their leaders teach them to be. So if people generally need to be rebuked for unfaithfulness, the leaders need it more because they have led the people astray. So Jesus and the apostles were continually being persecuted by

the religious leaders of the day because they were continually pointing out the unscriptural teaching and ungodly practices of the leaders and people.

Paul says that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3: 12.) The laws of our land prohibit the infliction of physical injury, so we are spared that form of persecution. But there are other forms, such as ridicule, exclusion from society, and embarrassment of one's children on account of the parents' religion. Many people find these forms of persecution as hard to bear as imprisonment, or beating. It is human nature to avoid suffering and all forms of unpleasantness; so many neglect, or refuse, to do their Christian duty in order to avoid persecution. One might as well deny Christ to avoid being burned at the stake, as to refuse to live right or teach the truth in order to avoid persecution. These are trials of our faith and loyalty, and to prove unfaithful in little things is to prove our unworthiness.

Golden Text Explained

1. God Demands First Place. The apostles rendered obedience to God

instead of to man when there was a conflict between the laws of God and

the laws of man, because God demands that man love him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. When Jesus was asked which is the greatest commandment in the law, he replied that man is to love God with his whole being. (Luke 10: 27.) And this love will lead man to obey God even though the law of the land demands contrary action. And Jesus says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take up his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10: 37-39.) From this there can be no doubt that the Lord expects us to put him first in our hearts and lives. No one can love God as taught in these verses without yielding unreserved obedience to him, even at the cost of his life. And this price the apostles, on the occasion of our lesson, were willing to pay if the rulers should demand it; and this price they finally did pay.

2. God Deserves First Place. It is not an unreasonable thing that God should demand first place in our hearts and lives, because he deserves that place. First, he deserves it because he gave us a being in the world. He gives us life, and breath, and all things. (Acts 17: 25.) Next, he deserves first place because he preserves our lives. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17: 28.) Next, he deserves first place because he gave his Son to die for us to save us from perdition. (John 3: 16.) Having given us the greatest blessings, God, the Giver, deserves the first and best there is in us.

From another point of view, God deserves our first love and obedience, because he is over all governments. No government has a right to demand

the first love and loyalty of a citizen, when that government is itself in subjection to God. And that even governments are subject to God we learn from the experiences of Nebuchadnezzar. (Dan. 4: 28-37.) And Paul tells us we are to be in subjection to the higher powers, or governments, "For there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom. 13: 1.) If the government demands our first loyalty, it denies its subjection to God, and sets itself in the place of God.

3. Some Practical Lessons. First, men should acquaint themselves with the laws of God and the laws of the land; and they ought to obey all the laws of the land which do not demand disobedience to God. Second, men must be given the right to interpret the laws of God for themselves. God has no interpreting agency. He has a teaching agency. The church of the Lord has the responsibility of teaching all things Jesus commands. But every man is left free to make interpretation and application of this teaching without interference or dictation from any man, religious council, or the government, so long as his application does not involve the rights and liberties of others. Third, the government should respect man's convictions both in times of peace and war. Men should be allowed to preach any doctrine they truly believe it is their duty to preach. This does not mean that he has the right in God's sight to preach any doctrine he pleases. Men should not be required to perform any duty to the government when doing so is a violation of conscience. This principle should not be applied simply to give comfort and shelter to any and all who wish to escape some danger or difficulty. If men pay no attention to what God says in the ordinary affairs of life, they have no right to claim exemption on account of conscience when the government calls them to a dangerous service.

Exposition of the Text

I. Effect of Peter's Sermon (Acts 4: 13, 14)

Beheld the boldness of Peter and John. Not long before this these very rulers had condemned Jesus. In verse 6 we learn that both Annas

and Caiaphas were present in this court. The rulers expected the disciple of Jesus to be afraid of the court which condemned their teacher, but in this they were disappointed. Though Peter was afraid and fol-

lowed afar off on the night of the betrayal, he now manifests a boldness surprising to the rulers. "Boldness of speech, when combined with charity and moderation, is a most important grace for a minister of Christ." But preachers should be careful not to mistake rudeness for boldness. Some preachers are coarse and rude in their treatment of audiences, showing no love and consideration. One can be bold and firm, yet kind and gentle. (1 Thess. 2: 7, 8.)

Unlearned and Ignorant. The word *unlearned* simply indicates that these men had not been educated in the schools of the Rabbis. They did not speak the language of the Rabbis, nor quote the great teachers of the day when they spoke. The word *ignorant* is from the Greek word *idiot*. It was used to mean those who lived in private as distinguished from those who were more in public. (Barnes.) Pulpit Commentary says it was a technical term used of those who had not studied in the rabbinic schools. It was generally known that the apostles were from Galilee, and in the eyes of the rulers of the Jews all Galileans were "rude and uncultivated" people. The fact that the apostles were unlearned and ignorant in the eyes of the rulers does not mean that they had not been taught. They had been for three years under the constant care and direction of the greatest Teacher this world has ever known. People should not justify an ignorant ministry in the church because of this statement about the apostles. These men were well taught in their field of activity. This might be proof that preachers do not have to study all branches of the arts and sciences before they are able to preach the gospel; but certainly it should not be used to prove that preachers should not be taught the Bible. When Jesus selected a man as an apostle who would not have the benefit of his private instruction, he chose a man who had a fine education. Paul was among the best scholars of his day.

They could say nothing. Two things rendered the rulers speechless. First, the boldness of the apostles, and the clarity with which they expressed themselves. Next, the presence of the man whom Peter had healed. It

was embarrassing to say nobody had been healed when the beggar was standing there perfectly sound. The beggar was too well known for the rulers to deny that he was the man who sat by the Beautiful Gate. There is nothing which silences argument like a demonstration, and it had its effect on these rulers.

II. Deliberations of the Council (Acts 4: 15-18)

Commanded them to go aside. The fact that these rulers commanded the apostles to leave the room while they deliberated was an indication of their embarrassment. This council was called the Sanhedrin. It was the supreme court of the Jews, and was composed of seventy-two men, chosen from among priests, elders of the people, and scribes. "The qualifications for membership were moral and physical excellence; 'good-looking, wealthy, learned,' able to understand several languages; of middle age; not a proselyte or a eunuch, or one who lent money on usury, or dealt in produce of the Sabbatical year; who was a legitimate offspring of priests, Levite, or Israelite; and one who was the father of children. . . . Twenty-three members formed a quorum. Its duties were: (1) 'To watch over the purity and legality of the priests.' (2) 'To try cases of unchastity in priests' daughters and married women who were accused by their husbands.' (3) To try false prophets who taught doctrines contrary to doctrines held by scribes and the Sanhedrin. (4) To see that neither king nor high priest acted contrary to the law. (5) To grant or deny kings the right to declare war." (Bible History, p. 63—Lanier.)

Notable miracle has been wrought. This is an admission which the rulers did not wish the apostles to hear, and accounts for them being asked to go aside from the council. If they had been honest, they would have accepted this miracle as evidence of the truth of what the apostles were preaching. The purpose of miracles was to confirm the word. (Mark 16: 20.) Nicodemus knew God was with Jesus by the miracles (John 3: 2), and Gamaliel, who was a member of the council at this time (Acts 5: 34), should have known as much, and

from his speech we may surmise that he was so impressed. But two things made it most difficult for these rulers—love of praise from men, and fear of punishment. (John 12: 42.) Nicodemus was alone with Jesus when he made his admission, but Gamaliel was in the council meeting. We often allow the estimate of our fellows to influence our conclusions and actions. Public opinion is often a greater force than God's opinion of us.

Manifest to all in Jerusalem. The fact that the man was so well known, and that he was known by so many people, and the fact that so many people had seen him walking and leaping after he had been healed made the matter all the more embarrassing to the rulers. They admitted they could not deny that a miracle had been performed. They would admit it among themselves, but they would not accept it. And they were dishonest enough to deny it publicly. This is the essence of hypocrisy and duplicity.

That it spread no further. Here is evidence of God's power in confirmation of God's word, and the religious leaders do their utmost to withhold it from the people. Religious leaders often do things to hinder the progress of truth. The Catholic Church discourages (all but forbids) its members to attend other church gatherings. Schoolhouses and other public buildings have been locked against gospel preachers because of the prejudice of community leaders. Opposition to the gospel is not a thing of the past.

Let us threaten them. Their secret caucus was to determine what they would do with these bold, unlearned men. They could have put them to death, as in the case of Stephen, but they would likely have to answer to Rome for that. They could put them in jail or beat them at a public whipping post, but people would ask too many questions. It would be embarrassing to tell people they were whipping men for healing a man who had been a cripple all his life. So it seemed wise to exert their authority in the least conspicuous way, which was to threaten them with dire punishments if they ever spoke again in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. So far as the council was concerned,

these apostles could speak all they pleased, or teach as much as they wished, but they must not connect it with the name of Jesus of Nazareth. They had killed that man, and so far as they were concerned he was dead and they wished he would stay dead. They did not wish to hear his name again.

III. Apostles Defy the Council (Acts 4: 19-22)

Whether it is right in the sight of God. First of all the apostles were concerned about what was right. In this they set a good example for all preachers of all time. They were not concerned about what was the best policy; they were not concerned primarily about what was tactful; but they were intensely interested in what was right. Next, they wanted to do what was right, not in the eyes of men, but in the eyes of God.

Judge ye. This council was composed of men capable of judging such matters, and the apostles appealed to them to judge, or decide, whether men ought to hearken to God or to men. These judges, if they were honest, believed they were doing God's service by serving as members of this council. In the performance of their duty, did they hearken unto God or to men? Judges resent even the implication that their decisions and actions are swayed by popular opinion. If then they held the position that men should do what God requires of them instead of what men wish them to do, they should not expect the apostles to go contrary to the command of the Lord to do what the council wished them to do.

We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. Peter and John did not mean to say that they had not the physical ability to say things contrary to what they had seen and heard, but that conscience, self-respect, self-interest, and the interest they had in others would not allow them to speak otherwise. They were full of these matters; they had been commanded by one whom they loved more than life to tell all men these things; they had no other message, and knew nothing else to say. It was as much as if they had said, Do what you please to us, but as long as we have life we will continue to

teach people the things we have seen our Lord do, and the things he gives us to teach. It was a clear-cut issue. You command us not to preach, but our Lord commands us to preach in his name. We will obey God rather than men. There was no backing down; there was no double talk which the rulers might construe as compliance with their decision, but which would allow the apostles to do as they pleased after they got away from the council.

All men glorified God for that which was done. All those who knew about the miracle, that had seen the man who had been healed. And there must have been a great number of people who knew it, because the council would not have been influenced by a small number. To glorify God means that they gave glory to God, or praised God for what had been done. This suggests that

they recognized that the miracle was wrought through the power of God. This being true, the apostles were, in the sight of the people, men of God, servants of God. Certainly God would not give such power to the servants of the devil. This was a great victory for God, for truth, for the church, and for the apostles.

The man was more than forty years old. This information was not given in the report of the miracle. (Acts 3.) But there it is said that he was born a cripple. If Luke had been trying to forge a miracle, he would have given the age of the man in connection with the first report. And the fact that the man was of age accounts for the embarrassment of the rulers. He was capable of testifying to the fact that he was born a cripple, to the fact of his age, and to the fact that he had been healed by the apostles.

Topics for Discussion

1. Contrast man's freedom under the law of the land to preach what he pleases with his freedom under God to preach what he pleases.

2. Does history justify the conclusion that state persecution of the church is a hindrance to the growth of the church?

3. In countries where the preaching of the Bible is supported by the state out of money raised by taxation, would it be right for a Christian to pay such tax if false doctrines were taught? If imprisonment were the penalty, what would be the proper course for the Christian to pursue?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Of what did Jesus forewarn his apostles?

From whom has persecution of God's servants usually come?

Why are religious leaders more ready to persecute God's servants?

What is promised to those who live godly in Christ Jesus?

What are some forms of persecution today?

Are these forms of persecution as hard to bear as physical injuries?

What of people who fail to do their duty to avoid persecution?

Golden Text Explained

What is the greatest commandment given?

What did Jesus teach about puffing the Lord first?

What will such love cause us to do for the Lord?

Why does God deserve first place in our love and loyalty?

What is the relation between God and the government?

What does this suggest with reference to the government's right to command us?

What is the first practical lesson drawn in the Golden Text?

What must man be left free to do with truth?

Does man have a right to his convictions in time of peace? Of war?

What limitation may reasonably be placed on this right?

Effect of Peter's Sermon

What Jewish rulers were in the council?

By what was Peter's speech characterized?

Can you distinguish between boldness and rudeness? What is the meaning of ignorant? Unlearned?

How did Jewish rulers look upon Galileans?

Were the apostles educated in their particular field of work?

What benefits are to be obtained from an educated ministry?

What two things rendered the council speechless?

Deliberations of the Council

Why did the rulers wish to deliberate in secret?

By what name is this council known?

What do you know of the qualifications of men in this council?

What were the duties of the Sanhedrin?

What great teacher among the Jews was a member of this Sanhedrin?

What admission did the council make?

What would honesty and fair dealing demand of the council?

What two things prevented these rulers from confessing that God was with the apostles?

How well known was the man healed? What effect did this have on the situation?

What was the chief concern of the Jewish rulers?

Can you give modern examples of this same spirit?

Why did the rulers not stone the apostles or beat them?

What did they do to stop the apostles from teaching?

Apostles Defy the Council

What was the chief concern of the apostles in this matter?

How did the apostles make a personal appeal to the councilmen?

Wherein lay the strength of this appeal?

What compelled the apostles to speak the things they had seen and heard?

Show why there was evident sincerity in their defiance of the council.

How widespread was the knowledge of the miracle?

What affect did this miracle have on the glory of God? On the church? The apostles?

How old was the man who was healed?

Of what importance is this mention of his age in the record?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson V—January 29, 1950

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA LIE UNTO GOD

The Lesson Text

Acts 5: 1-11

1 But a certain man named An-a-ni'-as, with Sap-phi'-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 Peter said, An-a-ni'-as, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 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 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 upon all that heard it.

6 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 done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 But Peter *said* unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.

10 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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings"* (Col. 3: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 4: 22-25.

Daily Bible Readings

January 23. M.....	Jehovah Hates a Lying Tongue (Prov. 6: 16-19)
January 24. T.....	Deliverance from Deceitful Tongue (Psalm 120)
January 25. W.....	Destruction of Deceitful Tongue (Psalm 52)
January 26. T.....	Lying a Prevalent Sin (Psalm 116: 9-14)
January 27. F.....	Satan, the Father of Lies (John 8: 44-55)
January 28. S.....	Disobedient Pretenders Liars (1 John 2: 1-6)
January 29. S.....	End of All Liars (Rev. 21: 5-8, 24-27)

TIME.—A.D. 30

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Peter, Ananias, and Sapphira.

Introduction

Lying is listed as one of the seven things which God hates. (Prov. 6: 17.) And yet it is one of the most prevalent sins among humanity. David said in his haste that all men are liars. (Psalm 116: 11.) The thought is that the sin was so prevalent in his day that his first impulse was to say that all men would lie. To lie is to utter a false statement with intention to deceive. One may utter a false statement, thinking it to be the truth when it is not, without being a liar. We sometimes hear preachers accuse all teachers of false doctrines of being liars. The charge is without foundation, for no man can know the hearts of all who teach false doctrines. Some of them undoubtedly honestly think they are teaching the truth.

There are several ways of lying. One may tell only half the truth in such way as to create a false impression. One of our poets said, "A lie which is half the truth is ever the blackest of lies." To tell a part and leave unsaid a part with the intention of making a false impression is

to lie. Again, there is the little (?) social lie. We tell people we are glad to see them, glad they called for a visit, when it is not true. We occasionally make statements which we allow people to take at their full value, while we have a mental reservation for the sake of our conscience. This deceives people with reference to the state of our hearts, and is therefore dishonest. There are people who will not lie to their neighbor, but will misrepresent matters to the government. And there are those who will lie when not under oath, but will speak the truth when put under oath.

Satan is said to be the father of lies. (John 8: 44.) Those who lie are doing the work of the devil, serving him, promoting his cause. It is for this reason that we are told that "all liars" will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone, where the devil will spend eternity. (Rev. 21: 8.) From this we should conclude that lying is a capital sin, and should endeavor to speak the truth at all times and under all circumstances.

Golden Text Explained

1. **The Command.** Since so many are inclined to be dishonest one way or another, the Lord has issued a positive command for us to refrain from it. One of the Ten Commandments reads, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Ex. 20: 16.) And Paul says, "Putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another." (Eph. 4: 25.) It follows, therefore, that one cannot engage in any form of dishonesty without disobeying God. And that such disobedience is of a grievous nature we may judge by the punishment threatened to all who lie. First, lying is catalogued with the very blackest of crimes. Second, the punishment is often referred to along with the punishment of the very worst sins. (Rev. 21: 8: 22: 15.)

2. **Reason for the Command.** Paul commands us to cease lying because we have "put off the old man with

his doings." Lying is consistent with the "old man"—the old manner of life which we lived before we became Christians. But since we have come into Christ, have "put on the new man" which is in the image of Christ, we are to cease everything that is inconsistent with the teaching and example of Christ. And certainly lying is most inconsistent with the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. "Let God be found true, but every man a liar." (Rom. 3: 4.)

The words *put off* are the translation of one compound Greek word which has the meaning of *getting out of* and *away from*. So when we "put off the old man," we are to get out of the old manner of living and get away from it. Getting away from the old man suggests our growth and development in the Christian life. And this growth into the likeness of Christ makes it necessary for us to quit lying. One who continues to lie

has not "put off" the old man; he has not "put on the new man."

Another way of expressing the same reason is found in verses 1-5 of this same chapter. Paul admonishes us to set our minds on things above, "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." We have died to the world and worldly things. Lying is of the world, not a heavenly thing. Having died to such things, we are no longer to be active in such things. A dead body is inactive, it does not respond as it did when alive. So we have died to sin and, therefore, should no more respond to the impulse to sin. Lying is sinful, and we are not to respond to the impulse to sin because we have died to all such. Again, Paul says, "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth," and then names several sins, the last of which is lying. So lying is something to be put to death. To put something to death is to end its life, stop its opera-

tion and activities. The word *members* in this verse refers to members of the body. Of course we are not to put them to death, but since sin has its seat in the body and is practiced by various members of the body, when we render our members inactive in sin, we have put them to death with reference to sin.

3. **Exhortations Based Upon the Command.** First, since our hearts may easily deceive us, we should examine our hearts thoroughly to detect any hypocrisy and tendencies to lying, and put them away as soon and as completely as possible. Second, habits are hard to break, and they linger long in our hearts after conversion. It behooves us all, and especially those given to lying before conversion, to be careful of our words and the impressions we make. Third, those who talk much should be exceedingly careful lest they utter falsehoods.

Exposition of the Text

I. Sin in the Church (Acts 5: 1, 2)

"But a certain man. In the previous chapter, the historian had given an account of the eminent liberality and sincerity of the mass of early Christians, in being willing to give up their property to provide for the poor, and had mentioned the case of Barnabas as worthy of special attention. In this chapter he proceeds to mention a case, quite as striking, of insincerity and hypocrisy, and of the just judgment of God on those who were guilty of it. The case is a remarkable instance of the nature of *hypocrisy*, and goes to illustrate the art and cunning of the enemy of souls in attempting to corrupt the church, and pervert the religion of the gospel. Hypocrisy consists in an attempt to *imitate* the people of God, or to assume the *appearance* of religion, in whatever form it may be manifested. In this case religion had been manifested by great self-denial and benevolence. The hypocrisy of Ananias consisted in attempting to imitate this appearance, and to impose in this way on the early Christians and on God." (Barnes.)

Sold a possession. We are not told here the nature of the possession, but in verse 8 we learn that it was a tract of land. This is similar to the trans-

action made by Barnabas who, "having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."

Kept back part of the price. When did they decide to keep back part of the money, and lie to the apostles? (1) It may be that they made this decision before they sold the land; planned the whole proceeding before the sale. If so we incline to view them as worthy of neither pity nor mercy. (2) It may be that seeing the benevolence of Barnabas and others, they were moved to do likewise; and that they sold the land with all good intentions to give the whole for the relief of the poor. But when the sale was made, and the money was in their hands, it looked bigger than they expected; and, too, they began to wonder what they would do in old age, and what would become of them if the church should cease to care for its members. In this way Satan filled their hearts with fear and the purpose to keep part of the money and lie to the apostles. If this is the case, we may well pity them for falling into the trap set by Satan for them. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Satan is continually setting such traps for everyone of us. No wonder Jesus

taught his disciples to pray for God to deliver them from the evil one. (Matt. 6: 13.)

II. Peter Deals with Ananias (Acts

5: 3-6)

Why hath Satan filled thy heart?

We are told that Satan entered into Judas and moved him to betray Jesus. (John 13: 27.) Yet Judas was responsible for his crime. Satan is not allowed to exercise dominion over us beyond our power to resist. (1 Cor. 10: 13.) But he does have the power to put thoughts into our hearts, and to bring them again and again to our attention in an effort to wear down our resistance. For this cause we should rejoice in the promise, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one." (2 Thess. 3: 3.) In the light of these promises, and on account of the punishment meted out, we may be sure that Ananias had not properly resisted Satan. (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9.)

To *lie to the Holy Spirit*. There is some difficulty in determining just how Ananias was lying to the Holy Spirit. Lightfoot and others suppose that Ananias had received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of apostles' hands, and that his actions on this occasion belied the presence of the Holy Spirit. But there seem to be too much supposition needed in this explanation. There is no evidence that Ananias had a miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit. But the apostles claimed to be guided by the Holy Spirit in teaching and governing the church, and if they could be deceived with ease, there would be grounds to doubt their claim. To lie to Spirit filled and controlled men was to lie to the Spirit.

While it remained. From this verse we learn that selling one's property and giving it to the apostles was not demanded by the Lord, but was on a voluntary basis. They did not have to sell the land; and after it was sold the money was their own to do with as they pleased. If they wished to give half and keep half, they could have done so. The sin was not in keeping part of the price, but in lying about the matter.

Thou has conceived this thing.

Peter asks how he had conceived this

thing in his heart. And yet in verse 3 it is said that Satan filled his heart. Satan could not have done so if Ananias had not been willing. We are tempted when we are drawn by our own lusts. If we have not the lust, there is no temptation. (James 1: 13, 14.)

Thou hast lied unto God.

In verse 3 Peter says Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. From this use of the words we are forced to conclude that the Holy Spirit is one Person of the Godhead. Some use this verse to prove that there is but one Divine Being, and that sometimes he is called God, at other times called Jesus Christ, and still at other times called the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is sent by and from God; Jesus said the Spirit would not come unless and until he went back to God; Jesus was seen by Stephen standing on the right hand of God; and God spoke from heaven saying he was well pleased with his Son when he was baptized. These and many other scriptures prove three distinct Persons in the Godhead. And this passage proves that the Holy Spirit was God.

Fell down and gave up the ghost.

This is an expression which simply means that he died, but the fact that he gave up something in death means that there is more to man than his physical body. What was the cause of his death? Did God exert miraculous power to take his life? Or was the shock of discovery of his hypocrisy sufficient to cause his death? We can never know just how his death was accomplished. But obviously it is intended that we accept it as the act of God as punishment upon the evildoer, as a vindication of the knowledge and power of God, and for the praise and glory of his church.

Fear came upon all that heard it.

God intended that swift judgment upon the evil doer would put fear into the hearts of others and restrain them from sin. If Ananias had got by with this deception, no one would have respected the apostles or the church. Many times elders of the church allow open sin in the church to continue unrebuked and undisciplined because they are afraid that discipline will bring trouble from within and criticism from without.

But such conditions will bring more criticism from without than firm discipline.

Carried him out and buried him. The young men, with deference to the aged, performed this unpleasant task. There seems to have been no ceremonies. His family were not even notified. His wife knew nothing about it until she was ready for the same service. Was that the usual treatment for sinners? Would it have a good affect on the world if the church would refuse to honor the sinner with a funeral service? Men live in wilful disobedience to God all their lives, never attending public services of the church, and then when they die their bodies are carried where they would not go when alive, and everything good is said about them which can legitimately be said. The first church simply wrapped the body and buried it out of sight. Which is proper today we may never know, but we ought to be careful about the honor we do people who have dishonored God and his Christ.

III. Peter Deals with Sapphira (Acts 5: 7-11)

About the space of three hours. This shows that no effort was made to tell her of the death of her husband. Surely she could have been reached with the sad news in that time. Did the apostles keep the news from her because of her part in the sin? Even so, that does not argue that sinners should be treated as honorably in death as the righteous. It is difficult for us who sin so often to abhor sin as much as we should. We cannot know and appreciate the enormity of sin as God does. It should be our constant prayer that we may be led to see the "exceeding sinfulness" of sin, so we may refrain from it.

Yea, for so much. Peter asked her if the land was sold for the amount which Ananias had given. She was given a chance to tell the truth and save herself from the judgment visited on her husband, if she had had no part in committing the sin.

You have agreed together. She was as deep in the mire as her husband, and so worthy of the same judgment as he. They had agreed to try the Spirit of the Lord. This seems to suggest that they had given some consideration to the claim of the apostles to be guided by the Spirit. While they were making their plans, no doubt one suggested to the other that the apostles, being guided by the Spirit, would detect the lie. But they doubted the idea of Spirit guidance in the apostles enough to take the chance. They gambled their lives on whether or not the apostles could detect their deception—and **they lost.** So many people are gambling their souls on whether or not they have to obey this or that commandment of the Lord. Better make it as sure as you can, rather than take as many chances as you think you can afford to take.

Fell down immediately. This was swift punishment; the sentence was not delayed. The wise man tells us that, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccl. 8: 11.) Here is an instance of the sentence being executed speedily. If God were to deal with sinners in the church that way today, what would be the result? Surely people would be more careful what they do. But the fact that sin is not speedily punished does not prove that it will not ultimately and surely be punished. The sentence is deferred in mercy. If we spurn the mercy and long suffering of God which waits for our repentance and salvation, we will surely reap the due reward of our deeds.

Fear came upon the whole church. This act of judgment and discipline had a salutary affect on the church. The Jews criticized Moses in a case similar to this (Num. 16: 41), but the church accepted this as the just judgment of God, and there seems to have been no complaint. This should teach us to fear the consequences of sin.

Topics for Discussion

1. Everything that is *genuine* has a *counterfeit*. Barnabas had genuine liberality in his heart, but Ananias

and Sapphira had the counterfeit.

2. The presence of the counterfeit in the church should not blind our

eyes to the presence of the genuine. People are inclined to magnify the counterfeit and overlook the genuine, especially if they are looking for excuses for their own failures.

3. Ananias and Sapphira furnish another proof of the fact that God cannot be mocked, and that we reap just what we sow. (Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

4. Physical and material wealth is tangible, so near us, and so necessary to our very existence, while spiritual values are intangible, and not absolutely essential to our physical welfare, that it is very easy to magnify

the importance and necessity of the material, while we all but lose sight of the value of spiritual things. Ananias put too great an estimate upon the value of material wealth, while he underestimated the power of God.

5. When at the crossroads compelled to make a decision as to what is best to do, we should make every decision as we know we would make it if we expected to fall dead on the spot if we deliberately decided to do wrong. Not all can be great, but all can be sincere.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

In what list of sins is lying found?

What indicates that lying is a prevalent sin?

Distinguish between a lie and a falsehood.

How many different ways of lying can you suggest?

What connection is there between Satan and lying?

Show how we promote Satan's cause when we lie.

What is the punishment due to all liars?

Show why the punishment is in keeping with the enormity of the sin.

Golden Text Explained

What great moral code forbids lying?

Give New Testament scriptures bearing on this point.

What is there to suggest how great a sin lying is?

What reason does Paul give why we should not lie?

What is the meaning of "put off the old man"? "Put on the new man"?

Explain what is meant by being dead to the world.

What is meant by putting our members to death?

Is it possible to deceive others because one is self-deceived?

What exhortation is given to people who talk much?

Sin in the Church

Whom did Luke use as an illustration of generosity and unselfishness?

Whom does he use in our lesson to illustrate selfishness and hypocrisy?

What is generosity? What is hypocrisy?

What was the nature of the possession these people sold?

When did Ananias and Sapphira decide to keep part of the money?

What part did Satan have in this matter?

Does he have liberty and power to do such to us today?

On account of this power of Satan, what should be our prayer?

Peter Deals With Ananias

Does the fact of Satan's work in our hearts relieve us of responsibility?

What restraint does God exercise over Satan in connection with us?

How then do you account for the sin of Ananias and Sapphira?

What is meant by lying to the Holy Spirit?

Were all Christians obligated to sell their property and give the money to the church?

What statement shows that Ananias and Sapphira made their own decision to sin?

What proof do we have here that the Holy Spirit is God?

What proof do we have of a plurality of persons in the Godhead?

What proof have we that man is more than a physical body?

What effect did the death of Ananias have on the people?

Was the body of Ananias given an honorable burial?

Discuss what should be our attitude toward those who have dishonored God who loved them and Christ who died for them. (It is best not to be too positive on either side)

Peter Deals With Sapphira

What indicates that no one tried to get word to Sapphira of the death of Ananias?

Why did Peter ask Sapphira if they received a certain sum for their land?

What is meant by trying the Spirit of the Lord?

How may we gamble with our souls?

Why are men's hearts set in them to do evil?

Why is the sentence against sin deferred?

May we reasonably expect the sentence to be relaxed entirely because it is deferred?

What is the effect of discipline in the church?

Why is it better to discipline evil doers than to allow sin in the church?

Read and discuss Topics for Discussion as time will allow.

Lesson VI—February 5, 1950

SELECTION OF THE SEVEN

The Lesson Text

Acts 6: 1-10

1 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Gre-cian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2 And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables.

3 Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Ste'-phen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Pr6ch'-0-rus, and Ni-ca'-nor, and

Ti'-mon, and Par'-me-nas, and Nic-6-la'-us a proselyte of An'-ti-och;

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Je-ru'-sa-lem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Ste'-phen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people.

9 But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Lib'-er-tines, and of the Cy-re'-ni-ans, and of the Al-ex-an'-dn-ans, and of them of Ci-il'-ci-a and A'-si-a, disputing with Ste'-phen.

10 And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“And *the word of God increased*” (Acts 6: 7a.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—James 2: 14-17.

Daily Bible Readings

- January 30. M..... Assistants Appointed to Help Moses (Num. 11: 10-23)
January 31. T..... Priests Organized for Their Work (1 Chron. 24: 1-6)
February 1. W..... Jesus Appointed Twelve Helpers (Mark 3: 13-19)
February 2. T..... Seventy Appointed to Assist (Luke 10: 1-16)
February 3. F..... Qualifications of Men Who Serve (1 Tim. 3: 1-13)
February 4. S..... About Women Who Serve (1 Tim. 5: 9-16)
February 5. S..... Servants to be Faithful (1 Cor. 4. 1-5)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—The Apostles and the seven chosen to serve.

Introduction

Human capacity is limited. Men can do just so much, and no more. Beyond that the work either goes undone, or assistants must be selected to carry on the work. Moses broke under the load he carried, and asked the Lord for men to help him carry the burden of judging the people of Israel. (Num. 11: 10ff.) Jesus could not go to all the cities of Palestine where people were hungering for the gospel of the coming kingdom, so he

appointed twelve at one time and seventy at another to go out in pairs to preach.

Leaders of the church have often made the mistake of trying to carry all the load by themselves. They lead the singing, the prayers, do all the teaching, preside at the Lord's table; they make all the decisions that are to be made. There are several reasons why this is a mistake. First, if there are other men

present who are capable of doing these things it is selfish and unfair not to use them. Next, men cannot continue always on account of old age, failing health, and death. If others are not trained, there will be no one to take their places when they are forced to drop out. Third, there are brethren who will insist that they be given some responsibilities, and when leaders selfishly refuse to share the lead with them, they either become discouraged and unfaithful, or stir up trouble in the church. Often churches grow up under the care and leadership of one man. Then a sudden increase in the population of the community brings other capable brethren into the membership of the church. It is hard for this one man who has always led the church to share the lead with those who have recently moved into the community. But if he does not share the leadership with

them, there is discontent and trouble. "Where no wise guidance is, the people falleth; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Prov. 11: 14.)

It is always well to proceed with caution in the selection of leaders in the churches. For this reason the Lord has specified the qualifications of those who take the lead in the work and worship of the church. Brethren sometimes think it not necessary to take these requirements too seriously, and some even argue that no one man is required to have them all. But in this, as in all things, the Lord knows best. Brethren who have these qualifications can do the work and will not give trouble. Men without these qualifications cannot do the work as well as they could if they had them, and many times men of this sort cause trouble in the church.

Golden Text Explained

1. In What The Increase Consisted.

There was no increase in the word of God in the sense that new and added revelations were made. Revelations were made as needed; the Holy Spirit guided the apostles in their teaching, and gave them proper teaching for every need that arose. But this increase was characterized by two things. First, there was an increase in the preaching of the word. The apostles had been giving some time to the distribution of food. Now that seven men had been appointed for that business, the apostles were free to devote all their time to prayer and ministry of the word. Second, there was increased reception of the word. Multitudes of people were influenced by it, as more people were reached with it. And there is nothing mysterious about this. Since the word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8: 11), we may expect the principle of sowing and reaping to hold true with reference to the seed of the kingdom. If we sow sparingly, we shall reap sparingly; if we sow bountifully, we shall reap bountifully. (2 Cor. 9: 6.) The apostles, being free to give all their time to preaching, sowed bountifully; hence the harvest of souls was plentiful. Churches sometimes make the mistake of curtailing their program of

preaching and teaching so they can pay for a new building. When the sowing stops, the reaping will soon cease.

2. **Things Contributing to This Increase.** An increase of preaching and teaching the word will not always mean an increase in reaping. There are other factors which must be taken into consideration. The Jerusalem church is a fine example to us of what a church should be in order for the preaching and teaching program to be effective. First, the church had a wise and unselfish leadership. They were wise in that they recognized the need of more workers; they were unselfish in that they were willing to share the honor of leadership with other brethren qualified for the place. Second, the church served those in need, manifesting pure and undefiled religion. (James 1: 27.) Jesus began both to do and to teach (Acts 1: 1), and his doing prepared the hearts for his teaching. The church that forgets to prepare the soil for the seed by rendering service in the community will find that its reaping will be slow and small. Third, they had a program of preaching the gospel to the lost, and teaching the membership, which was adequate to the community. At least twelve men were giving all their time to preaching and

teaching, and no doubt others, as Stephen later did, were giving some time to the ministry of the word. They preached in the temple, the market-place, from house to house, anywhere and everywhere they had opportunity. Preachers who are satisfied to preach two sermons on Sunday and conduct prayer meeting Wednesday night, reaching only those who come to the church house, need not expect a very great increase of the

word in their community. Fourth, this was a satisfied and peace-loving church. They were satisfied with the leadership of the apostles, and they were pleased to follow them in the program outlined by them. Wise leaders can do little with a balky, murmuring, mutinous membership. People of the community will not be impressed with the preaching, regardless of how good it is, if brethren are continually involved in trouble and disturbances.

Exposition of the Text

I. Conditions Calling for Selection of the Seven (Acts 6: 1, 2)

The number of disciples was multiplying. The word *disciple* means a learner, and might be used of people who were not members of the church. But here, as elsewhere, it does refer to church members. All Christians are disciples, but not all disciples are necessarily Christians. The number of disciples in Jerusalem has been variously estimated, some guessing as high as twenty thousand. As the children of Israel in Egypt increased in spite of Pharaoh's opposition and persecution, so the church multiplied in numbers in spite of the persecution of the Jewish leaders.

There arose a murmuring. When people sold property to help the poor, they brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4: 37.) So we conclude that the apostles were seeing to the distribution of the money. But the church outgrew them; the job got too big for them without taking too much time from their preaching. So mistakes were being made; the job was not being done properly, and people began to complain about it.

Grecian Jews against the Hebrews. The Grecian Jews were those Jews who lived in Grecian territory, that is, in countries where the Greek language was spoken, and where Greek customs prevailed. The word translated Grecian means "those who imitate the customs and habits of the Greeks, who use the Greek language." (Barnes.) The fact that the word means those who imitate the Greeks would imply that they were not Greek proselytes to the Jewish religion and then converts to Christianity. The word Hebrews here means

those Jews who lived in Palestine, who spoke the language of the Jews, the Aramean.

Because their widows were neglected. It was perfectly human that suspicions and jealousies should exist and arise between these two elements of the church. These feelings between them had existed for a long time, and conversion would not eradicate them overnight, in a miraculous kind of way. Christianity works like leaven, slowly. Undoubtedly the apostles did not intentionally neglect these widows. But the Hebrew widows being more at home, and knowing their way around, were getting first attention, and it was easy for the Grecian women to feel slighted and to think it was intentional; hence the murmuring.

The daily ministration. This suggests that provisions were given out daily. Like the manna of old, they got their portion daily. This, of course, would add to the amount of work to be done, and was all the more reason the apostles needed assistants.

The twelve called the multitude. Since the complaint was based on party differences, it was wise to remedy the situation in a public manner. The apostles had no desire to do any thing but right, so they had nothing to keep secret. Such open, above-board manner of dealing inspired confidence in those affected, and proved the equity of the apostles to all.

It is not fit. The word translated fit, literally means *pleasing*. But here it is best to understand it in the sense of what is proper. And the word *forsake* in this verse suggests that giving their time to distribution

of food when it should be given to teaching the word was not the wise nor the right thing to do. A soldier may *leave* his post of duty honorably, but he can never *forsake* it honorably. So it is implied that if they use their time serving tables, they will be *forsaking* the greater duty.

II. Selection and Appointment of the Seven (Acts 6: 3-6)

Look ye out. The church was given the right to make the selection of the men who would take care of the distribution of food. Since the people were the ones to be served, it is wise and proper that they should have the right to select the men who serve them. This was a conciliatory move on the part of the apostles. It was as much as to say, If you are being neglected, select men who can serve you. If then the work is not done properly, you will have no one to blame but yourselves.

Of good report, etc. The apostles reserved the right to specify certain qualifications. They were not willing to turn the matter over to just anybody. Men who serve must have a good report; they must be men who stand well with the people whom they are to serve. They must be full of the Spirit. There is no indication that this meant a miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit such as enabled them to work miracles. Paul tells us to be "filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5: 18.) It means that they were to be imminently spiritual, their lives full of the fruits of the Spirit. (Gal. 5: 22, 23.) And they were to be filled with wisdom. They were to be wise, full of good common sense and practical knowledge of how to do things.

Whom we may appoint. Attention is called to a distinction between selection and appointment. It is the right of the church to select the men who serve. Those who do the appointing should have very little to do with the selecting. Preachers can make the mistake here that will cause trouble in congregations. The preacher who takes the authority to select elders and deacons, as well as to appoint them, is unwise and invites trouble, division. Preachers have been known to select, or manipulate the selection of, officers in the church

who were favorable to them so as to perpetuate themselves in the pulpits of certain churches. This, of course, is unchristian, and but few are guilty of it. But when the preacher takes too much part in the selection of officers, he lays himself open to suspicion of acting in his own interest. So it is wise for preachers to keep themselves in the clear so that they will give no occasion to the adversary to cause trouble.

Continue steadfastly in prayer. Evidently prayer had a greater place in the church then than it has now. In their preaching, they spoke for God to the people; in the prayers they spoke to God for the people. This may also suggest private devotions that they might be properly prepared for the duty of preaching. Some preachers have allowed themselves to be so weighted down with material matters, such as visiting the membership, printing of bulletins, etc., that they have little time for reading, meditation, and prayer. For this reason their sermons have more husk than kernel. A preacher who spends less than three or four hours daily in the study of God's word will not serve his congregation a very rich diet on Sunday.

The ministry of the word. The word ministry is the translation of a Greek word akin to the word for deacon. It denotes the employment of a servant. They would devote themselves to the service of preaching and teaching the word. That, therefore, is a service eminently worthy of all of a man's time. Those who "enter the ministry" to keep from working for a living have the wrong view of the matter; and before they make a success they will find that when they entered the ministry, they entered a field of work.

And they chose Stephen. Special mention is made of Stephen as being filled with faith and the Holy Spirit because of what is to follow. All seven of these names are Greek, which suggests that the church selected Grecian Jews to take care of the distribution of food in answer to the complaint from Grecian Jews. This showed a good attitude, and was proof that there was no intentional neglect in the first place.

Prayed and laid their hands on them. It is always right to pray, and especially when the church is taking some important step. They would pray that God be pleased with what they were doing, and that he would bless these men in the discharge of their duties, and that peace and harmony might prevail in the church. They laid hands on them, not to impart any ability, for men of ability to do the work were selected, but to designate them publicly as the men authorized to do a certain work. Is it right to lay hands on men today when appointing them to such service? Yes, it is right, though not necessary. If some other means of designating the men is used which is as orderly and effective, the same end is gained and no wrong has been done.

III. Conditions Following: Appointment of the Seven (Acts 6: 7-10)

The word of God increased. Since the apostles were free to give all their time to the ministry of the word, it increased. The more it was preached, the more it influenced men.

Disciples multiplied exceedingly. To say that the number of disciples was multiplied would have indicated great growths in numbers, but when it is said they multiplied *exceedingly*, we are led to believe that the growth of the church was most unusual.

Priests were obedient to the faith. Not just a few, but a great company of them. It may well be assumed that there were few priests among the first converts to Christianity. But when many thousands of people were converted, the priests were forced to give the matter serious consideration. From this statement we learn that *the faith* is something that can be obeyed. Jude speaks of the faith delivered to the saints. (Jude 3.) And Paul writes of faith *coming*, and faith being *revealed*. (Gal. 3: 23, 25.) So we conclude that the word faith

is used here to mean the gospel—that system of faith revealed by Christ as opposed to that system of works as revealed by Moses. But the fact that the gospel is a system of faith does not mean that there is nothing for man to do. For that faith is to be obeyed, and here we have an example of priests obeying the faith. What if they had refused to obey the faith? Would they have ever been saved? There is no salvation for anyone as long as that one refuses to obey the faith. Obedience implies action, moving at the command of another. An inactive, disobedient faith, is dead and is of no value. (James 2.)

Stephen wrought wonders and signs. The matter of the seventh verse suggests the passing of some time after the appointment of the seven. And if Stephen served in the place to which he was appointed, we would not expect him to begin immediately to preach and work miracles in confirmation of the word.

Synagogue of the Libertines. The word *Libertine* means *freed-men*. It is known that many Jews were slaves of the Romans, and that many of them were set free. But Barnes suggests that there was a city in Africa called *Libertina*, and that since the names of all the other synagogues in this list are derived from the places where the people lived, this should be understood as a synagogue composed of the people from *Libertina*. It has been said there were four hundred and eighty synagogues in Jerusalem alone at that time.

Not able to withstand the wisdom. Being inspired, Stephen had the advantage of his opponents in argument. They had to study and plan what to say; he depended on the Holy Spirit for his message. They, therefore, were not able to answer his arguments; they were put to shame because of their inability, and decided to get rid of such an opponent.

Topics for Discussion

1. What per cent of the income of a congregation should be devoted to caring for the poor? Paying the preacher's salary?

2. The peace and growth of the

church depends as much on the selection and appointment of qualified men as elders and deacons as on anything else. Great care and caution should be exercised in these matters, and personal interests should never

be allowed to have anything to do in determining our selection.

3. Selection of men is one thing, and appointment is another. No man is authorized to serve the church in

any capacity until there has been an appointment of him to that place. No man has a right to take such an office to himself without the selection and appointment being made.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Relate the circumstances in connection with appointment of assistants to Moses?

What help did Jesus have in preaching the kingdom?

What mistake do church leaders sometimes make in such matters?

Give and discuss three reasons why it is a mistake for church leaders to do all that is to be done in the church without asking others to assist.

In what does Solomon say there is safety?

What provision has the Lord made for safe competent leadership?

Golden Text Explained

In what sense did the word of God increase?

How do you account for this increase?

What must churches do today if they expect great ingathering of souls?

Name some conditions which might prevent great ingatherings in spite of much preaching.

What can you say of the wisdom and unselfishness of the Jerusalem leadership?

How did the Jerusalem church prepare the people for receiving the word preached?

What can you say of the necessity of an adequate teaching and preaching program?

What do you think of preachers who do more than "fill the pulpit"?

What can you say of the cooperation of the membership with the leadership at Jerusalem?

What can each individual contribute to such a situation in the church today?

Conditions Calling for Selection of the Seven

What does the word disciple mean? Are all disciples Christians?

What do you know of the number of disciples in Jerusalem?

Who first had charge of the distribution of food?

What indication do we have that they were making mistakes?

Distinguish between Grecian Jews and Hebrews.

What was the complaint made? By whom made?

What is implied by the daily distribution of food?

How did the apostles show their fairness and freedom from personal interest?

What is implied in the word forsake? What would the apostles not forsake?

Selection and Appointment of the Seven

What duty, and privilege, was given the church in this matter?

Show why this was a wise move on the part of the apostles.

What qualifications did the apostles demand of the men to be selected?

Compare these with the qualifications as given by Paul in 1 Tim. 3.

Distinguish between selection and appointment.

Why should those who appoint have little to do with the selection?

In what did the apostles wish to continue?

How may preachers today render themselves unfit for their best preaching?

What is meant by the ministry of the word?

What is said of Stephen? Why is special mention made of him?

Of what did the service of appointment consist?

Is it essential that we follow this ceremony exactly?

Conditions Following the Appointment of the Seven

What is said of the growth of the church?

Why is special mention made of the priests coming into the church?

What is meant by obedience to the faith?

What is implied with reference to salvation by faith only?

What is said of the later work of Stephen?

What is meant by the synagogue of the Libertines?

What is said of Stephen's ability to preach the word?

What effect did his preaching have on these Libertines?

Lesson VII—February 12, 1950

STEPHEN STONED

The Lesson Text

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

54 Now 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

Spirit, looked up stedfastly 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 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord;

58 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.

59 And they stoned Ste'phen, calling upon *the Lord*, 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 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-dae'-a and Sa-ma'-ri-a, except the apostles.

2 And the devout men buried Ste'phen, and made great lamentation over him.

3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."* (Rev. 2: 10b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 7:1 51-54.

Daily Bible Readings

February 6. M.....	First Death Connected with Religion (Gen. 4: 1-8)
February 7. T.....	Prophets of God Persecuted (2 Chron. 36: 11- 16)
February 8. W.....	Jeremiah Among the Persecuted (Jer. 37: 11-21)
February 9. T.....	Jesus' Estimate of His Generation (Luke 11: 45-52)
February 10. F.....	What Men Have Suffered for God (Heb. 11: 32-40)
February 11. S.....	Patient Sufferers Rewarded (Rev. 2: 8-11)
February 12. S.....	Rest for the Weary (Rev. 21: 1-8)

TIME.—A.D. 36.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Stephen, Saul, and the mob.

Introduction

The emotions of men can be stirred more deeply and violently on the subject of religion than on anything else. You can differ from your neighbor on politics, or on the best form of insurance, and a lot of other things, and still be friends; but a few heated arguments on the subject of religion will likely cost you his friendship. The first death of a human being was caused over the fact that one man's offering was accepted and the other's rejected. (Gen. 4.) Families, tribes, and even nations have fought and died for religious principles.

True prophets of God have given their lives for the privilege of pointing out the mistakes of people and directing them to the truth. False prophets rarely ever suffer. They have no conscience, so are always in agreement with the people who are in power. They tell people what they are sure the people wish to hear, so there is no reason for them to suf-

fer. There are some who think preachers should "preach the gospel and let other people alone." Aside from the fact that the nature of the gospel is such that this course is impossible, it is a fact that no true prophet of God ever followed such a course; Jesus did not follow this course; nor did any apostle follow such a course. Jesus and his apostles and Stephen could all be alive today (if it were not appointed unto men once to die) if they had followed this course. These true servants of God preached things contrary to the belief and practice of people; they showed people where they were wrong in their doctrine and worship; and they pressed upon them the necessity of a change in their faith and practice. People do not like to be proved wrong in religion, so the best and surest way seems to be to silence the preacher. The subject of

our lesson, Stephen, was silenced, but his message lived on. Others took up his words and kept them ringing in the ears of the people who thought

to stop them by silencing Stephen. The word is *living*, and regardless of how many preachers are silenced in death, the word lives on.

Golden Text Explained

1. Faithfulness Required of All.

Paul says that in stewards it is required that a man be found faithful. (1 Cor. 4: 2.) Regardless of one's ability, he can be faithful. The one with little ability can be just as faithful in what he has as one with great ability. The one talent man was not condemned because he had little ability, but because he was not faithful in the use of what little he had. (Matt. 25.) And the reward is not determined by the amount one accomplishes in life. The two talent man was blessed with the same blessing as was the five talent man. He had been as faithful in the use of the little he had as was the five talent man with the great amount he had, so his reward was the same. If the reward should be determined by our ability, and God gives some more ability than he gives others, as is certainly the case, God would be a respecter of persons. But since faithful use of whatever God gives us, whether it be little or much, brings the highest reward, we determine our own reward. Hence the exhortation to be faithful, even unto death.

2. **Faithful Unto Death.** Some take this to mean that we are to be faithful *until* death. And this it certainly means, or implies, but more is included. Faithful *until death* means faithful up to the time of death regardless of what might be the cause of death. But faithful *unto death* means to be faithful even at the price of one's life; be faithful even if it means your death. John had just said, "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." Tribulation was ahead of them, and such as might call on some of them to deny Christ or die for him. But **be** not afraid of men who can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. (Luke 12:

4.) Let your fear of the Lord sustain you in the hour of trial. If one

is faithful to the Lord, death will be sweet release from sufferings and trials, and an entrance into a very far better place. (Phil. 1: 23.) Lack of assurance that one is right with God and sure for heaven causes people to shrink from death and dread its approach. But when Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God looking favorably upon him, he had all the assurance heaven could give. And by faith that assurance is ours today. As surely as Jesus was waiting to receive the spirit of Stephen, so he will receive the spirits of all who live for him and die for his cause. All we need be concerned about is whether we are faithful to him or not.

3. **The Reward Promised.** The crown of life is the reward promised to all who are faithful unto death. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him." (James 1: 12.) And, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me in that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.) In a race only one can win, but not so in the Christian life. The reward does not go to the swiftest or the strongest; the reward goes to the faithful, to them who love the Lord and his appearing. All who finish the course faithfully, who enter and run according to the rules, receive the crown, the reward waiting at the end of the course. There the Judge waits with intense interest in the outcome of each individual runner. If one stumbles, he pleads his cause before the Father. (1 John 2: 1, 2.) If one becomes discouraged and gives up the race, all heaven is interested and uses every righteous means to restore him; and when he is restored

there is more rejoicing in heaven than over ninety and nine righteous. (Luke 15.) But if one gives up and

refuses to try again in spite of heaven's interest, there is no crown of life for him.

Exposition of the Text

I. The Death of Stephen (Acts 7: 54-60)

When they heard these things. In true Elijah fashion Stephen took off the mask of hypocrisy from the Jewish leaders. He told them they were "stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears." He reminded them that their fathers persecuted the prophets of old. He charged them personally with murdering the Righteous One foretold by the prophets they professed to believe and honor. And he affirmed that they were not keeping the law they had received through angels, and which they professed to respect so highly. There was little else with which he could charge them; no further accusations were necessary.

They were cut to the heart. They felt keenly the sting of rebuke and reproach, and if they expected to hold the respect of the people such accusations as these would have to be silenced.

They gnashed on him with their teeth. This expression is indicative of furious rage. If religious prejudice can cause people to act like dogs, surely it is something to be avoided at all cost.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit. Here again we have the idea of being filled with the Holy Spirit where it does not refer to the possession of miraculous power. The possession of such power did not give them who had it any advantage over us who do not have it in bearing trials and persecutions. Stephen was eminently spiritual, filled with the fruit of the Spirit.

Looked steadfastly into heaven. This suggests that Stephen realized he could expect no help, no just trial or protection, from the Sanhedrin. If he had any friends, they were so hopelessly outnumbered that there was nothing they could do for him. He was not inclined to fight for his safety. So resigning himself to whatever was the will of the Lord, and looking to him for grace to bear the trial, he ceased to say anything to the people.

Saw the glory of God. and Jesus.

It is not said that he saw God, for no man has ever seen God. (John 1:

18.) A manifestation of the presence of God was given Stephen, but of what it consisted we have no means of knowing. Jesus is said to have been standing on the right hand of God. Some think the standing posture denotes intense interest.

I see the heavens opened. There is considerable difference of opinion as to whether Stephen saw with his physical eye, or whether it was a vision which the Lord gave him in his hour of trial. If he saw with his physical eyes, of course unusual power had to be given them since the range of the human eye does not extend so far. But no one doubts the power of the Lord to do that. However there is no necessity for us to decide the matter. A vision of what was actually taking place in heaven would do for Stephen all that would have been accomplished by seeing with the physical eye. Paul saw and heard things in heaven, and he never did know whether he was in the body or out of the body. (2 Cor.

12.) Stephen likely did not know whether he was seeing a vision, or looking upon something with his physical eye. Since it makes no difference, it is useless to speculate.

They cried out with a loud voice.

They considered Stephen a blasphemous character whom God would certainly not recognize with a glorious appearance. He not only insulted them by his accusation, but now he claims the approval of God. This was too much for them to bear, so they stopped their ears refusing to hear any more, they rushed upon him all at once, and threw him out of the city. They would not shed his blood in a place which to them was holy. And the law of Moses required stoning to be done without the camp. (Lev. 24: 14.) Stoning was also the manner of death determined by the law of Moses for those guilty of blasphemy. And the witnesses were to cast the first stones. (Deut. 17: 7.) M. Vincent says the first

witness was to hit the victim on the breast with a large stone, and if this did not kill him, the second witness was to throw a stone, after which the people were to throw stones until he was dead.

At the feet of a young man named Saul. The witnesses laid aside their long flowing garments in order to throw without hindrance. This is the first mention we have of Saul of Tarsus. He is called a young man, but this does not give us much idea of his age. Men up to forty years of age have been called young. It is supposed that he was around thirty years old at this time. He seems to have been in charge of the stoning, being given this responsible position by the Sanhedrin, of which he may have been a member.

Calling upon the Lord. The words *the Lord* are not in the Greek. The whole statement was directed to Jesus. It should read, *Calling upon and saying, Lord Jesus.* This is a prayer offered to Jesus, a strong proof of the deity of Jesus; he is worthy of our worship.

Lay not this sin to their charge. The disciple follows the example of his Master; he prays for those who take his life. How often we berate our fellows for much less wrongs.

He fell asleep. This is a beautiful expression of the act of death. Jesus used it of his friend Lazarus. (John 11: 11.) Paul used it of Christians who have died. (1 Thess. 4: 13.) It suggests three things: (1) It suggests rest. We sleep after the day's work to gain strength for another day. (2) It suggests continuity of identity. The man who gets up in the morning is the same one who went to sleep the night before; he retains his individuality and personality. So the sleep of death does not destroy these in man. (3) It suggests the resurrection. If we only sleep, we will rise after a while. Much consolation may be derived from this with reference to our loved dead, and much encouragement may be derived from it as we approach the end of life.

II. A General Persecution (Acts 8: 1-4)

Saul was consenting unto his death. The Greek word for consenting means *consenting with delight*. "He fed his eyes with this bloody spectacle, in

hopes it would put a stop to the growth of Christianity." (M. Henry.) Paul says that those who consent to sin are as worthy of death as those who do the act. (Rom. 1: 32.) Paul confessed his sin afterward. (Acts 22: 20.) This in addition to Paul's statement that when Christians were tried he cast his vote against them, leads some to think Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin. (Acts 26: 10.) But the proof is far from being conclusive. He was hardly old enough, and he probably did not have a family, and unless an exception was made in his case these would keep him out of that body of men.

Great persecution against the church. The death of Stephen was the spark which set off the conflagration. Like wild animals, they had got the taste of blood, and it was sweet to them, and their thirst for blood could not be satisfied easily. But God can get glory out of disaster; he can turn seeming defeat into glorious victory. If the church had stayed in Jerusalem, what would have become of the lost in other parts of the world? If a ripened head of wheat is struck with a stick, grains will be scattered all around. Seemingly the wheat is destroyed. But in a short time there will be fifty to one hundred heads of grain where there was only one. The church had been under the instruction of inspired apostles and preachers for several years, and it was ripe for scattering. In the providence of God, the scattering did not come before the church was ready to go into all the world.

Except the apostles. It seems that the persecutors would have hunted for the apostles first. They had often had them before the council, so the apostles were known to all the leaders among the Jews. But why would the apostles remain in Jerusalem? One writer thinks they stayed because if they had left they would have been charged with timidity and weakness. Was Paul weak and afraid when he ran? (Acts 9: 25; 14: 6.) There may be other reasons, but surely one is that when churches were established they had to know where to find the apostles to send for them to lay hands on some of the converts and enable them to carry on the work. When Philip had converted people at Samaria, Peter and John

were asked to come down to impart spiritual gifts. (Acts 8: 12-17.)

Devout men buried Stephen. Contrast this burial with that of Ananias. Men braved the persecutors to give the faithful man a decent burial. Hackett thinks *devout men* refers to "pious Jews," and not Christians, but men who were not in sympathy with the mob and would have no part in such lawless deeds. But the fact that they made great lamentations over his death is a little out of line with this idea.

Saul laid waste the church. Saul was the leader of the persecution. He got his orders from the Sanhedrin. (Acts 9: 1, 2.) His method was to imprison Christians, persecute them until in anger they would say something he could construe as blasphemy, and then he could put them to death. (Acts 26: 11.) He was no respecter of persons, persecuting the women as well as the men. (Acts 22: 4.) This was Saul before the tenderizing influence of the gospel had done its work. One cannot conceive of Paul the Christian doing such things. Do good unto all men. (Gal. 6: 10.) Be not overcome of

evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12: 21.) Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. (Rom. 13: 10.) These are his sentiments after he came under the influence of the gospel.

Went about preaching the word. They did not leave Jerusalem and hide out for the storm to blow over. The leaders of the Jews had authority where they were preaching, and could arrest them the same as in Jerusalem, though they were not likely to do it soon. This suggests courage on the part of the teachers and preachers of the word. The fact that the church was scattered, and the church was composed of both men and women, has been taken by some to mean that the women as well as the men preached. No doubt women did their duty in this matter, but to use this to prove public preaching is to make it contradict teaching in other passages. (1 Cor. 14: 34; 1 Tim. 2: 12.) This is a good example for families going from one community to another where there is no church. Preach the gospel and establish one.

Topics for Discussion

1. Those who think it is unchristian to debate on gospel subjects with false teachers have a difficulty explaining why it was a Christian act on the part of Stephen. If it be said that his debate caused his death and therefore we should not do it, must we also quit preaching the gospel because preaching caused the death of many in that day?

2. Those who think preachers should not say anything which will make their hearers angry have a difficulty explaining why the Holy Spirit directed Stephen to antagonize his hearers. It is urged that if the preacher makes the audience angry

they will not come to hear him, and if he can't get people to hear him, he can never reach them. This may be urged as a reason for tact and for kindness. A gospel preacher's first thought is not what will be the effect on the hearer, but to preach the truth as revealed. If the truth angers people to the point of persecuting the preacher, preach the truth.

3. The Lord's interest in people did not cease when he ascended. He is still personally interested in each individual, and attends him in his hour of trial. Our failure to draw near to him is all that keeps him from doing more for us.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

On what subject are men's emotions most deeply stirred?

In connection with what subject was the first murder committed?

Why have not false prophets been persecuted?

Why can we not preach the gospel and let other people alone?

What was there about the preaching of Jesus and his apostles to anger people?

Why cannot the word be stopped by killing preachers?

Golden Text Explained

What is required of a steward?

Does one's ability determine whether or not he is faithful?

Does one's ability determine the reward?
 What is meant by being faithful unto death?
 Of what had John warned these Christians?
 Why is death a relief to the Christian?
 Why do we dread and fear death?
 What is the reward promised in our text?
 To whom does this text promise the reward?
 What of those who stumble in the race of life?
 What about those who quit the race and never try again?

The Death of Stephen

What unpleasant thing did Stephen say to his hearers?
 What effect did it have upon them?
 What is meant by being full of the Holy Spirit?
 What is suggested by Stephen looking into heaven?
 What did Stephen see?
 Was this actual physical sight, or a vision?
 Where did the stoning occur? Why?
 Who cast the first stones?
 Who supervised the stoning? What of his age?
 To whom did Stephen direct his prayer at this time?
 What does this suggest as to the nature of Jesus?

What was Stephen's attitude towards those who stoned him?
 Whose example was he following in that prayer?
 What three things are suggested by speaking of death as sleep?

A General Persecution

How did Saul look upon this stoning of Stephen?
 Do you think Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin at this time?
 How did this persecution result in good?
 What can you say of the timing of this persecution?
 Why was it necessary for the apostles to stay in Jerusalem?
 Contrast the burial of Stephen with that of Ananias.
 Who were the devout men who buried Stephen?
 What do you know of Saul's methods of destroying the church?
 Contrast Saul the persecutor with Paul the Christian.
 Is not this power of the gospel enough to commend it to all thinking people?
 What did the people do as they fled from Jerusalem?
 Is there anything in this record to prove that women preached as did the men?
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VIII—February 19, 1950

CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN

The Lesson Text

Acts 8: 26-40

26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Je-ru'-sa-lem unto Ga'-za: the same is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and behold, a man of £-thi-0'-pl-a, a eunuch of great authority under Can-da'-ce, queen of the £-thi-o'-pl-ans, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Je-ru'-sa-lem to worship;

28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet I-sa'-iah.

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

30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading I-sa'-iah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;

And as a lamb before his shear-er is dumb,

So he openeth not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:

His generation who shall declare?

For his life is taken from the earth.

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

35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Je'-sus.

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

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

39 And when they came up out of

the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at A-çó-tiis: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caes-a-re'-a.

Golden Text.—*"How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things."* (Horn. 10: 15b.)

Devotional Reading.—Acts 8: 5-12.

Daily Bible Readings

February 13.	M.....	Praise for the Preacher (Isa. 52: 7-12)
February 14.	T.....	Command for the Preacher to Go (Matt. 28: 16-20)
February 15.	W.....	The Message of the Preacher (Luke 24: 44-49)
February 16.	T.....	The Duty of the Hearer (Mark 16: 14-20)
February 17.	F.....	Great Commission Applied (Acts 2: 22-41)
February 18.	S.....	God's Saving Power (Rom. 1: 16, 17)
February 19.	S.....	Importance of Preaching (1 Cor. 1: 18-25)

Time.—A.D. 35.

Places.—Highway between Jerusalem and Gaza; Azotus, and Caesarea.

Persons.—Philip and the Ethiopian Nobleman.

Introduction

The Holy Spirit is not in the business of converting souls without the aid of human instrumentalities. Preachers and teachers of the gospel have a most important place to fill in the Lord's plan of saving souls. The word is the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 8: 11.) And seed must be sown in order to reap a harvest. We sow the seed of the kingdom when we teach and preach it. It is not a question of whether angels can do this work; or whether the Holy Spirit can preach the gospel to people. The question is, What has God determined about the matter? Paul says we have this treasure in earthen vessels. (2 Cor. 4: 7.) And he tells us why this arrangement has been made, "That the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." If angels preached the gospel, man might attribute his salvation to the messenger. If the Holy Spirit did the work directly so that man could feel with the physical sense of touch, man could not then walk by faith. Anything we can know through either of the five physical senses cannot be a matter of faith. When man

is used to preach the gospel, no one attributes his salvation to the messenger, but to the power of the message; and the hearer walks by faith in his obedience to the commandments of the gospel, and the enjoyments of the salvation brought to him through the gospel.

Ethiopia was a country south of Egypt. It was bounded on the east by the Red Sea, on the west by the Libyan desert, and extended to the Abyssinian highlands on the south. The inhabitants were of the Hamitic race. They were a dark people (Jer. 13: 23), and are said to be men of stature. (Isa. 45: 14; 18: 1-3.) It is sometimes spoken of in scripture as Cush, though this term applied to more territory than Ethiopia. Ethiopia and Egypt were united under the rule of the same kings for long periods. "Shortly before our Saviour's birth, a native dynasty of females, holding the official title of Candace, held sway in Ethiopia, and even resisted the advance of the Roman arms. One of these is the queen noticed in Acts 8: 27." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Golden Text Explained

1. Source and Setting of Our Text.

Our text is a statement which Paul took from Isa. 52: 7. When Isaiah was writing, the Jews were in captivity, and he pictures the approach of a messenger telling them of their

release from captivity and their return to freedom in their home land. Paul did not quote verbatim. The passage reads, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that pub-

lisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that sayeth unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." When it is said that the feet of the messenger are beautiful, it is not intended to affirm that the feet of a messenger were any better looking than the feet of any other man. But to a weary home-sick company of exiles the coming, the running, of a messenger of release and return would be a beautiful sight. They have been praying for such, and they have been waiting anxiously for the message; and when finally the messenger comes into view, his feet pounding the dust in the road with heartening rapidity, their joy is expressed in a figure of speech, putting the feet of the messenger in the place of the message brought.

The setting of our text and Paul's use of it is in connection with the necessity of preaching the gospel. He has just said that all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Then he reasons that none can call on the Lord except those that believe. Next, he says that none can believe until they hear the testimony. And then he concludes that none can hear without a preacher. So it follows that none can be saved unless there is someone to preach the gospel to them. Viewing man in the bondage of sin, hoping and praying for release from that bondage and a return to the fellowship and communion of his Maker, how beautiful are the feet of him who brings the good news of salvation in Christ. From this point of view we understand that preaching the gospel is the greatest work in the world. It is essential to the saving of souls.. Other activ-

ities may supply food to the hungry, or bring release from physical suffering; but these are of little importance when compared to saving a soul from hell to the enjoyments of heaven and the glory of God.

2. Observations from the Text.

First, our text says that the gospel is *glad tidings* of *good things*. The message of the gospel cheers the soul. Preachers of the gospel spread more cheer than any other group of people on earth. The world would be overburdened with sadness of eternal destruction were it not for the cheer brought by the glad tidings of the gospel. Second, what a wonderful reception the messenger of release from cruel captivity would receive from the captives! Could you think of a group of captives persecuting the one who brought them the message of release? And yet that is what the world did to Jesus. That is what the world did to the apostles and early preachers of the gospel. And if the manner of release is not according to the wishes of the captives, messengers still are abused and persecuted. Third, it may be observed that the messenger has nothing to do in determining what he tells the captives. He is given a message to deliver, and he has no authority to change any part of it to the slightest degree. The final happiness and welfare of the ones receiving the message depend on the faithfulness of the messenger in delivering exactly what he was sent to deliver. So gospel preachers today are obligated to deliver to the captives of sin that message of hope just as the Lord gave it to them. The message has power to save only when it is kept pure.

Exposition of the Text

I. Preacher and Hearer Brought Together (Acts 8: 26-29)

An angel spake unto Philip. The word *angel* means *messenger*. Whether this was a heavenly messenger, or a man cannot certainly be known. Men are spoken of as angels. (Rev. 1: 20; 2: 1.) But that angels from heaven do such work as was here done we may conclude from Paul's statement that angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." (Heb. 1: 14.)

Philip is the man who preached the gospel with such great effect in Samaria (Acts 8: 5-13), and was one of the seven deacons chosen in the Jerusalem church. (Acts 6: 1-6.) He is not to be confused with the apostle Philip.

Arise, and go toward the south. The angel gave Philip directions for travel. Since Samaria, where the angel talked with Philip, was some fifty to sixty miles north of Jerusalem, and Philip was most likely walking and the Ethiopian was rid-

ing, it was necessary for Philip to leave some time before the Ethiopian left Jerusalem. The place of meeting was to be south of Jerusalem, but not at Gaza. The town of Gaza was about sixty miles southwest of Jerusalem.

The same is desert. This does not mean that Gaza is desert, or even deserted or uninhabited, though Albert Barnes prefers this explanation. However he has to make two sites of the town, one the old Gaza partially destroyed by Alexander the Great, and the other the new Gaza built a short distance from the former site. It is better to understand the angel to mean that Philip will go to the intersection of two highways, and that the place where these roads intersect is desert, or uninhabited. (Pulpit Commentary.) Dr. Robinson, who traveled much in the holy land, says there were several roads leading from Jerusalem to Gaza, since Gaza was the gateway to Egypt from the east and north. And one of these roads went through that section of Judaea which was actually a desert country. (Luke 1: 80.)

A man of Ethiopia. Was he a Jew, a proselyte, or a heathen? We may dismiss the idea that he was a heathen, for he had been to Jerusalem to worship. Some argue that he was a Gentile, and the first to be converted from among them. But if so, why was not the Holy Spirit given him instead of being given to Cornelius? The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius is said to be proof of God's willingness to accept Gentiles the same as he accepts Jews, and from this we may safely imply that he was the first convert from among Gentiles. Some oppose the idea that this man was a Jew because he held such a high office in Ethiopia. But Joseph held a higher one in Egypt (Gen. 41: 40), and Daniel was next to the king of Babylon. (Dan. 6: 3.)

Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. The word Candace is like the word Pharaoh, it was not the family name, but one given all queens who ruled in Ethiopia for a long period of time.

Sitting in his chariot reading. He used his time to good advantage. It is easy for those who travel to cultivate the habit of being idle. Varying scenes catch the eye, and people coming and going claim the attention. But

this man used his time well. He was interested in things spiritual, and carried his Bible on his journey. People who are ashamed to be seen in public reading a Bible are not worth much to the Lord. He was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, a chapter devoted to the Messiah. Had he heard of Jesus in Jerusalem and was he trying to determine whether Jesus met the demands of the prophecies?

The Spirit said unto Philip. Not the angel this time, but the Holy Spirit. It is significant that the Holy Spirit had a part in this conversion, but that he did not come to the man to be converted. Those who believe in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion have a difficulty in explaining why the Holy Spirit did not come upon the Ethiopian. The angel and the Holy Spirit served to get the preacher and the man to be converted together, and when that was done, the conversion was accomplished through the power of the gospel. The gospel has the power to save (Rom. 1: 16), but it must be preached before that power operates on the human heart.

II. The Message Preached (Acts 8: 30-35)

Understandest thou what thou readest? Why such a question? The method of approach has been the subject of many lessons and discussions. This one seems to have been a little abrupt, yet it was most effective. Philip did not know whether the man he had contacted was a believer in Christ or not, until he answered this question. If the man was a believer, he would know enough about Jesus to see in him the fulfillment of the passage in Isaiah; but if he was not a believer in Jesus, he would not be able to understand the passage. Hence Philip began by asking him if he could understand the passage.

How can I, except some one shall guide me? From this it is not to be concluded that no passage of scripture can be understood by the ordinary man without clerical help. Nor is it impossible now for a person to understand the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah without the help of a preacher, provided he will use the New Testament which presents the evidence

that Jesus is the Messiah. But the Jews who reject Jesus and the New Testament as an inspired revelation from God, cannot understand the chapter. They are hopelessly confused as to the meaning of the chapter. It presents the human, sorrowing, and suffering side of the Messiah, which the Jews deny as inconsistent with the conquering, ruling Messiah as pictured in other scriptures.

He was led as a sheep. This refers to his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. He was meek, not resisting those who took him, knowing that his hour had come. Though not intended here, yet we can forget that he was a lamb without spot and blemish, though tempted in all points like we are. And the fact that he opened not his mouth brings to mind Peter's words, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not." (1 Pet. 2: 22, 23.)

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away. This was the climax of his humiliation; it began when he left heaven to be made flesh. Though he was in the form of God, and was on equality with God, he emptied himself and was found in fashion as a man and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2: 6-8.) The word judgment here does not mean his ability to use good judgment, to know what was best to do. But in his arrest and trial both before the Jews and the Romans, there was no semblance of justice. They were determined what would be the outcome of the trial before it began. They hired men to swear lies that they might have something against him. His right to a just judgment was taken away.

His generation who shall declare? This difficult sentence is explained in various ways. One thinks the word generation means his spiritual seed, followers, and suggests that they shall be innumerable. Another thinks it refers to his manner of life, and since he is taken from the earth, who will be left to declare it? And still another thinks the word generation refers to the people among whom Jesus lived, and the meaning is, Who can describe the character and wickedness of the generation which committed the enormous crime of that age in putting him to death?

III. Ethiopian Becomes a Christian (Acts 8: 36-40)

Behold here is water. It has been argued that there could not have been water enough to immerse since this place is called a desert. But McGarvey, Hackett, Robinson, and other reliable authors tell of a number of springs and streams that run through this part of the country. Tradition points out a place, and a chapel was built near it, where a stream of water issues from a hill sufficient to irrigate a small valley below.

What doth hinder me to be baptized? Why did the man ask such a question? How did he know to ask about baptism? Philip had preached Jesus. It follows that in preaching Jesus, Philip told the man something about baptism. The example of Jesus being baptized, and the great commission given just before he left the earth are enough to cause any sincere person to wish to be baptized.

At this place in the record, our Text leaves out the following, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Irenaeus, born A.D. 130, quotes the verse, and so does Cyprian. "So that in the second and third centuries, long anterior to the oldest existing manuscripts, this entire verse must have been found in the codices both of the Greek and Latin churches." (Pulpit Commentary.) Hence Philip must have required the man to confess with his mouth his faith in Jesus before he would baptize him. (Rom. 10: 9, 10.)

They both went down into the water. This language leaves no doubt about where the baptism was performed—in the water. It does not necessarily prove that the act of baptism was immersion, but it does prove that the men were in the water. Going down into water is not necessary to sprinkling and pouring, but it is to immersion. Would the men have gone down into the water if they intended to sprinkle or pour water on the head?

He baptized him. Here we have the proof of immersion. All Greek authorities say the Greek word baptizo means to dip or immerse. Verbs of action suggest certain mental pic-

tures when heard. One word cannot suggest two or more different mental pictures when used but once. What action did Jesus have in mind when he commanded baptism? What action did Paul have in mind when he spoke of baptism as a burial and resurrection? (Horn. 6: 4.) One has not obeyed the command of the Lord until he has completed in his life the action which was pictured in the mind of the Lord and his apostles when they used this word. Hence one has not been baptized until he has been buried and raised, immersed, in water.

Came up out of the water. This is opposed to *going down into the water*. If they only went *unto* the water's edge, how could they come *up out of* the water? Those who sprinkle and pour neither go down into the water, nor baptize, nor come up out of the water. How then can they claim to obey the teaching of the Lord?

Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip. "The expression asserts that he left the eunuch suddenly, under

the impulse of an urgent monition from above, but not that the mode of his departure was miraculous in any other respect." (Hackett.)

Eunuch went on his way rejoicing. He had much over which to rejoice. He had been saved from the power, pollution, guilt, state, and penalty for his sins. He had been born into the family of God and made an heir of God, in position to receive the greatest blessings ever offered to human beings.

Philip was found at Azotus. This is another name for the old Philistine city of Ashdod, where Dagon, one of the Philistine gods, was destroyed. (1 Sam. 5: 1-5.) It was about thirty miles north of Gaza. Caesarea was about fifty to sixty miles north of Azotus, and about the same distance northwest of Jerusalem, situated on the Mediterranean Sea. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great and given its name in honor of Augustus Caesar. It was the seat of the Roman government for Palestine. Philip lived there for many years afterward. (Acts 21: 8, 9.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Since angels are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for them whom shall be heirs of salvation, is it unreasonable to think they might serve today to get the preacher and the heir of salvation together?

2. Since confession is not mentioned in either statement of the great commission, is it proper to include it as

one separate act of obedience essential to salvation? Does Paul's statement in Rom. 10: 9, 10 teach that it is essential to salvation?

3. From all that we are told in this story, what can we learn about baptism, as to the action, design, and subject?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What place does preaching have in the Lord's plan to save souls?

Why is preaching by man given this place in the gospel plan?

How does preaching by man make it necessary for us to walk by faith?

What do you know of the location, physical characteristics, and rulers of Ethiopia?

Golden Text Explained

From whose writings did Paul take our Golden Text?

Give the interpretation of the verse as it reads in Isaiah.

Discuss the Text in the light of its setting in Paul's writing.

How does Paul prove the necessity of preaching?

How does this work compare in importance with other types of work?

What of the gospel as a source of cheer?

Have preachers always been received as messengers of glad tidings of good things?

What responsibility has the messenger for the content of his message?

Preacher and Hearer Brought Together

How is the providence of God implied in the angels' directions to Philip?

How far was Gaza from Jerusalem?

What do you know of Philip? His work?

What is the meaning of desert? To what does it refer?

What do you know of the man of Ethiopia? Was he a Jew?

Do you think he was a Gentile, and the first Gentile convert?

Why is it reasonable to think a Jew could hold such high government office?

What is the meaning of the word Candace?

What is suggested by the fact that this man was reading while he traveled?
 What part did the Holy Spirit have in this conversion?
 What part did the gospel play in this conversion?

The Message Preached

What question did Philip first ask? Why?
 Why did the man need guidance? Must we all have such guidance today?
 Why cannot orthodox Jews understand Isaiah 53 today?
 What is implied in speaking of Jesus as a sheep going to slaughter?
 In what way was his judgment taken away?
 What is the meaning of "Who shall declare his generation"?

Ethiopian Becomes a Christian

If they were in a desert, how could there be enough water to baptize a man?

What caused the man to ask to be baptized?

What of a gospel which never causes anyone to ask to be baptized?

Do you think Philip baptized the man without asking him to confess Christ?

What is implied by the fact that they went down into the water?

What is the meaning of the word baptize?

What is implied by the fact that they came up out of the water?

What did the Spirit do when he caught away Philip?

What did the Ethiopian have about which to rejoice?

What do you know of Azotus?

What do you know about Caesarea?

What is the last mention we have of Philip?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IX—February 26, 1950

SAUL CONVERTED

The Lesson Text

Acts 9: 1-9, 17-19

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Je-ru'-sa-lem.

3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven:

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

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Je'-sus whom thou persecutest:

6 But rise, and enter into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus'-cus.

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

17 And An-a-ni'-as departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Je'-sus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized;

19 And he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus'-cus.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18: 3.)"*

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 9: 10-16.

Daily Bible Readings

February 20. M..... Paul's Account of Conversion (Acts 22: 3-21)
 February 21. T. Another Statement from Paul (Acts 26: 2-23)
 February 22. W..... Some Events Following Conversion (Gal. 1: 11-24)

- February 23. T.....Saul's Conversion an Example (1 Tim. 1: 12-17)
 February 24. F.....Paul's Testimony to the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 1-11)
 February 25. S.....What Paul Gained in Conversion (Phil. 3: 1-16)
 February 26. S.....Reward for Faithful Service (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)

TIME.—A.D. 36.

Place.—Near Damascus.

Persons.—Jesus and Saul.

Introduction

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is an important link in the chain of proof that Jesus Christ arose from the dead. All admit that Saul of Tarsus lived; and all admit that he became Paul the zealous missionary. The question, "Why the change?" must be answered in favor of the resurrection of Christ and the genuineness of Christianity, or it must be answered in such way as to deny both. Could his change have been caused because he was becoming unpopular with the Jews and might lose his position? He stood near the top of the ladder of fame and honor, had a most important position, and was succeeding. (Gal. 1: 13, 14.) And had he been seeking worldly honor and fame, he knew it could not be found by joining a despised and persecuted people. Can the change be accounted for on the ground that he was a fickle and changeable man, not capable of making a decision and staying with it? His faithful adherence to Christ in spite of persecution disprove such a baseless charge. His wide education and the matchless productions of his pen prove him to be a man of unusual mental ability. The note of sincerity runs through all his writings, and the fact that he suffered persecution continually is proof that

he served the Lord from conviction, and not for money or worldly honor. But if he was sincere and capable mentally of making right decisions, he is a qualified witness to the things he affirms. He says he saw Christ after his resurrection; he says he heard Jesus speak to him. If he told the truth, Jesus was raised from the dead and Christianity is all that Paul claims for it. If he did not tell the truth, he was either insincere, or was not capable mentally of interpreting his experiences and emotions. Shall we say a man who could write the epistle to the Romans was lacking in mental ability? Shall we say that an insincere man would suffer as Paul did? Again, could Paul be insincere and deceive a man of Luke's ability for so long a time? Luke was with him for a period of several years; he lived with him day after day in such intimacy that deception would have been impossible. If we deny the sincerity of Paul, we must also deny that of Luke. The more we study the conversion of Saul and the life he lived for nearly thirty years thereafter, the more will we be convinced of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the genuineness of Christianity as lived and taught by Paul the apostle.

Golden Text Explained

1. Conversion is an Act on Our Part. The King James version reads, *Except ye be converted*. This mis-translation, changing a verb from the active to the passive voice, has been the source of a lot of false teaching. On this account people have prayed for an experience "better felt than told" as evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and their conversion to Christ. They thought conversion was something God would do to them instead of something they must do. This does not mean that one can atone for his sins and dispense with the services of Jesus as

his mediator. Conversion in this text does not include that. The thing stressed as essential to an entrance into the kingdom in this text is *turning from sin*. It is natural for men to seek positions of honor and fame, to seek after wealth and influence. The apostles argued among themselves who would be the greatest in the kingdom. (Matt. 20: 20-28.) They had unholy ambitions and pride; they were seeking their own good in preference to that of others. To check such unholy desires and motives, Jesus said, ye must turn and become as little children.

2. Characteristics of Little Children.

What are the characteristics of little children which one must cultivate in order to be what the Lord wishes him to be? First, freedom from desire for worldly honor, positions of power, and wealth. Children go about their play with no thought of being rich and exercising power over the others. Next, children do not make distinctions based upon wealth and position. The child of the millionaire will play with the pauper's child and think nothing of it. It is unchristian for us to make such distinctions. (James 2: 1-9.) And in connection with this it may be added that a child can be satisfied with sufficient clothing and shelter for its comfort, and gives little thought to whether the clothing is fine or ordinary. The child is not embarrassed if its clothing is poor and patched. We have too much pride when we give too much attention to our outward appearance and too little to the care of the inward man. Next, the child is teachable; he has not such pride and conceit that he thinks no one can teach him anything. So the child has an inquiring mind that raises many questions. We must cultivate the hunger and thirst for the knowledge of God, and be willing to

learn from anybody regardless of his college training or position in the social world. Next, children are dependent on others for the necessities of life. So we must recognize our state of dependence upon God for the things essential to our spiritual growth. Those who are too proud to admit their dependence on God, must turn and become as humble and trusting as the child.

3. Condition of Membership in the Kingdom. This text has been used to prove the necessity of a change in order to become Christians. This is not its primary use. These apostles to whom it was addressed were already the followers of Christ. But since the kingdom was not established at this time, he said unless they turned to become childlike they could have no part in the kingdom. But the teaching of this text may well apply to members of the church today. Many in the church need to turn and become childlike in order that they may enter into the everlasting kingdom. (2 Pet. 1: 11.) This turn, or change, cannot be accomplished in a day or a month; it is a gradual process of growth. The decision can be made today, but translating that decision into action will take a lifetime.

Exposition of the Text

I. Saul, the Persecutor (Acts 9: 1, 2)

Breathing, threatening and slaughter. Breathing here suggests the panting of one engaged in unusual physical activity, or struggling to give vent to unusual passions and emotions. The threats were to discourage the weak, as well as to give vent to the pent-up emotions of the persecutor. But those who would not be discouraged by the threatening were to be slaughtered. The word slaughter indicates the "brutal and indiscriminate killing of human beings." This indicates that Paul became so intense in his purpose to exterminate the church that he was guilty of indiscriminate killing. About all he had to know about a person to put him to death was that he was a Christian.

Went unto the high priest. Here Paul is said to have received authority from the high priest. In 22: 5 he says he obtained letters from the elders, and in 26: 10 he says he got letters

from the chief priests. But there is no difficulty here as the Sanhedrin was composed of elders, priests, and scribes, and usually presided over by the high priest. It is very probable that the whole body was convened for consideration of the matter of extending this persecution to other cities as far away as Damascus, as well as the matter of whom to be entrusted with this mission.

Letters to Damascus. This city was one hundred and forty miles distant from Jerusalem, a matter of five or six days' journey on foot. It was one of the oldest cities in Syria, was "founded by Uz, the son of Aram, and the grandson of Shem," and has held a prominent place both in the historical and prophetic portions of the Bible.

Unto the synagogues. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem certainly had no authority politically in Jerusalem, much less in the distant city of Da-

mascus. But Jews everywhere recognized the religious authority of that body. So the letters were directed to the synagogues. In this way Paul gained the assistance of the rulers of the synagogues in locating Jews who had left the system of Moses for that of Christ.

If he found any of the Way. They spoke of Christianity as a way. It was a way of worship different from that commanded by Moses. It was a way of life which called for different faith and loyalty. It was a way which was repulsive to Saul because it differed from the faith of his fathers, and contrary to what he thought God demanded.

Bring them bound to Jerusalem. Saul was not given the authority to kill on the spot. It was his object to put Christians through "the third degree" and cause them to utter some word which could be construed as blasphemy, and then put them to death. (Acts 26: 11.)

II. Saul, the Convicted (Acts 9: 3-9)

A light out of heaven. Some attempt to show that this was a natural occurrence, a flash of lightning. But from all that is said of this appearance of Jesus we conclude that it was the light of his glory. When he was transfigured his face shone as bright as the sun. (Matt. 17: 2.) Is it unreasonable to think his glorified appearance would be brighter than the sun at noon? (Acts 26: 13.) Saul was not alone in seeing the light, for those who were with him saw it also. (Acts 22: 9.)

He heard a voice. The sense of hearing, as well as that of sight, was used to convince Saul of his mistakes. In the mouth of two witnesses, or three, shall every word be established. Paul had the witness of his eyes and of his ears; he both saw and heard. That a man of his ability should be deceived as to what he saw and heard under such circumstances is unthinkable.

Why persecutest thou me? That which we do to the Lord's people, we do to him. (Matt. 25: 40; 1 Cor. 8: 12.) Paul's only answer to this question was his ignorance and unbelief. (1 Tim. 1: 13.) But these did not keep him from being a sinner, the chief of sinners.

Who art thou, Lord? The word Lord is not to be taken to mean that Saul recognized the one speaking to him. If he had recognized him, he would not have asked this question. This word, Lord, meant little more than our word Sir. It was a title of respect. And certainly Saul knew by the brightness of the light that he was being visited by one eminently worthy of respect.

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Did Jesus actually appear to Saul? Did Saul really see Jesus? Modern scholars generally answer these questions in the negative. But if we are to believe the records, we must conclude that Saul really saw Jesus. Ananias said, "The God of our fathers has appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth." (Acts 22: 14.) Jesus told Saul he was to be a witness both of the "things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee." (Acts 26: 16.) Paul said, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:

1.) And last, he said Jesus appeared to him (1 Cor. 15: 8), so he was a qualified witness to the resurrection.

Told thee what thou must do. In Acts 22: 10 we learn that Saul asked the Lord what he should do, and was told to go into Damascus to learn what to do. It is significant that Jesus did not tell Saul what to do to be saved. This work has been given into the hands of men, and even our Lord respects this plan. Jesus atones, mediates, and intercedes for us, but he does not preach the gospel and tell people what to do to be saved.

Hearing the voice, but beholding no man. Here it is said that the men with Saul heard the voice, while in 22: 9 it is said they did not hear the voice. Critics have thought this a contradiction, but we often use the word *hear* in the two senses in which it is used in these two chapters. When one is calling to another at some distance, he often gets the reply, I can't hear you. If he could not hear, how did he know anyone was speaking to him? The truth is the sound waves reached his ear sufficiently for him to know the other was talking, but they did not reach him sufficiently for him to understand. So the men with Saul heard the voice (9: 7), but

did not understand what was said. (22: 9.)

When his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. Commentators are divided as to what produced blindness in Saul, but the majority think it was caused by the brightness of the light, and give 22: 10 as proof. This may be true, but it is difficult to explain why it turned Saul blind but did not so affect those who were with him. It is said that they saw the light. (22: 9.) That Saul was blind and the others were not, we know; but why or how it was done we are not told, so can never know. What a different man from what he was when he started. Then he was breathing threatening and slaughter, leading others on to do his bidding; but now he is begging mercy and being led by his companions.

He was three days without sight. During this time he was praying. (Verse 11.) Some take this as sufficient evidence that Saul was saved at the time Jesus appeared to him. Cornelius prayed, but yet he was to send for Peter to tell him how to be saved. (Acts 11: 14.) Saul could not have been saved three days before he was told what to do to be saved. He was convicted of his sins, but conviction is one thing and salvation is another. Convicted men asked what to do to be saved, and Peter told them to repent and be baptized. (Acts 2: 37, 38.)

III. Saul, the Christian (Acts 9: 17-19)

Ananias laying his hands on him. Of this Ananias we know nothing except what is said in the accounts of Saul's conversion. It is said he was a "devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there." (Acts 22: 12.) He, like many other Jewish Christians, had not learned that the law of Moses was not still binding, so was "zealous for the law." (Acts 21: 20.) But what is the significance of laying hands on Saul? Did Ananias confer any spiritual blessing? We are told that Ananias was sent that Saul might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. That he had the power to lay hands on for restoring of Saul's sight may be ad-

mitted, but that he had power to give Saul any miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit is denied. Saul was to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and only the Lord, not even an apostle, could do that. (John 1: 33; Matt. 3: 11.)

To say that Saul received the Holy Spirit at the hands of Ananias, is to affirm something of Ananias never affirmed even of an apostle, and to affirm that Paul did not stand on an equal footing with the other apostles in references to his baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Fell from his eyes as it were scales. It is not said that scales fell from his eyes. But his sight was restored as completely as if scales had been taken off his eyes. All admit the miraculous here, though many deny anything miraculous caused his blindness. If Saul was not miraculously blinded, it follows that his companions were miraculously saved from blindness, since they saw the same light Saul did. So it seems reasonable to this writer that his sight was taken and restored by miracle.

He arose and was baptized. Nothing in this account is said of what Ananias said to Saul in answer to his question about what he must do. We learned in verse 6 that Saul asked what he must do, and that he was told to go to Damascus where he would be told what he must do. From all that is said in the several accounts of his conversion, we learn of nothing Ananias told Saul to do, except to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22: 16.) If Ananias did what Jesus said he would do, and if we have a record of what he told Saul to do, this is it. If Saul asked what he must do to be saved (and what else would a convicted sinner ask about), and if this is the answer Jesus said Ananias would give him, it follows that Saul had to be baptized in order to be saved. And the fact that baptism was to "wash away sins" is proof of its connection with salvation. To wash away sins simply means forgiveness through the blood of Jesus. In Acts 2: 38 we have: (1) Believers; (2) Repentance; (3) Baptism; (4) Remission of sins. And here we have: (1) Saul a believer; (2) Penitent for

three days; (3) Baptism; (4) Washing away sins. Paul told Timothy that his conversion was an example for all thereafter who should believe on the Lord to life everlasting.

(1 Tim. 1: 16.) Those who follow this example, pattern, may well trust in the Lord to save them; but those who refuse to follow this example have no right to be saved.

Topics for Discussion

1. In the conversion of Saul we see the foreknowledge of God (Gal. 1: 15, 16); the mercy of God (1 Tim. 1: 13); and the wisdom of God (2 Cor. 11: 5, 6) in the selection of a man who was capable of being used for such a great service.

2. Some things to account for if Jesus did not really appear to Saul: The light above the brightness of the sun; the voice which was heard by all, and understood by Saul; the blindness of Saul; the silence of these

men with Saul through the years if Saul did not tell the truth; the change of Saul in life and doctrine; and the ability of Saul to write the books he wrote concerning the life and doctrine of the church.

3. The appearance of Jesus to Saul was not primarily for his salvation, but to make him a witness to the fact of the resurrection. To that end he must both see him and hear a word from his mouth (Acts 22: 14, 15), and it is distinctly stated that Saul both saw and heard Jesus speaking to him.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Of what great question is the conversion of Saul strong proof?

Name some ways unbelievers account for Saul's change.

What do we have as proof of Saul's sincerity?

In what way is the sincerity and integrity of Luke involved in this question?

Golden Text Explained

What difference do you see between "be converted" and "turn again"?

What mistake have people made who think conversion is a miraculous work of God?

To what does the "turn again" of our text refer?

Why was this statement made to the apostles?

Name and discuss the characteristics of children which Christians must have.

Are there some characteristics which children have that Christians must not have? (1 Cor. 14: 20.)

Was our text given to prove that people must repent to be saved?

What was the primary meaning to the apostles?

How may its teaching be applied to us today?

Saul, the Persecutor

What is suggested by breathing threatening and slaughter?

To whom do the various accounts say Saul went for authority, and how may these accounts be reconciled?

What do you know of the city of Damascus?

Why did Saul go to the synagogues to carry on this persecution?

Why is Christianity called the Way?

Did Saul have authority to condemn and kill?

What was his method of procedure?

Saul, the Convicted

What did Saul see near Damascus? How do you account for its appearance?

What did he hear? What of the possibility of his being deceived?

In what way was Saul persecuting Christ? May we do so today?

What proof do we have that Jesus really appeared to Saul?

Did Jesus tell Saul what to do to be saved? Why?

Did the men with Saul hear the voice and reconcile the accounts?

What do you think caused Saul's blindness?

Contrast Saul's condition at the beginning of the journey and at the end.

What is there to suggest that Saul was a changed man?

What is the difference between conviction and salvation?

Saul, the Christian

What do you know of this Ananias?

Why did Ananias lay his hands on Saul?

By whom did Saul receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Did Ananias have power to confer the Holy Spirit upon Saul?

Did scales fall from Saul's eyes?

If Saul's blindness was caused by the brightness of the light, how do you account for the fact that his companions were not blinded?

What did Ananias tell Saul to do?

What is meant by washing away sins?

Can you develop the parallel between Acts 2: 38 and Acts 22: 16?

For whom was Saul's conversion made an example?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson X—March 5, 1950

CORNELIUS CONVERTED

The Lesson Text

Acts 10: 30-44

30 And Cor-ne'-li-us said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,

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

32 Send therefore to Jop'-pa, and call unto thee Si'-mon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Si'-mon a tanner, by the sea side.

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

34 And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

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

37 That saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all

Ju-dae'-a, beginning from Gal'-i-lee, after the baptism which John preached;

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

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Je-ru'-sa-lem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest,

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.

43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word.

GOLDEN TEXT. — "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition (Eph. 2: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING. — Acts 10: 24-29.

Daily Bible Readings

February 27. M.....Gentiles Promised Justice (Isa. 42: 1-9)
February 28. T.....Gentiles to Honor Jehovah (Mai. 1: 6-14)
March 1. W.....Gentiles in Great Commission (Mark 16: 14-20)
March 2. T.....The First Gentile Conversion (Acts 11: 1-18)
March 3. F.....First Great Gentile Church (Acts 11: 19-26)
March 4. S.....Gentiles Free from Jewish Ceremonies (Acts 15: 1-21)
March 5. S.....Gentiles Grafted In (Rom. 11: 11-32)

TIME. — A.D. 41.

PLACE. — Caesarea.

PERSONS. — Peter, Cornelius and family, and six Jewish brethren.

Introduction

The Greek word from which we get our word *Gentiles* simply means a people, or nation. The word Gentile

occurs but few times in the Old Testament, but the word nation occurs many times with reference to the

various peoples of the earth. It is a matter of choice with the translator whether the original is translated *Gentile* or *nation*. But when Abraham was chosen to be the founder of a distinct nation for a definite purpose which made it necessary that they be preserved separate from all other people, this word came to have a different meaning, referring to any and all people outside of the select family. And the misunderstanding of this select family as to their relation to God, and to other people, caused the word to come to have an invidious, or odious, connotation. And this use of the word is most prominent in the New Testament. One who will not hear the church in the settlement of disputes is to be as a "Gentile and a publican," or a heathen. (Matt. 18: 19.) But Jesus died for all, so in the church there is to be no such distinctions. There is neither Jew nor Greek (Gentile, heathen), for we are all one man in Christ. (Gal. 3: 28.) Those who once were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, and are no longer strangers

and foreigners, but are fellow-citizens in the household of God. (Eph. 2: 14-21.)

The conversion of Cornelius is the first record of a Gentile conversion. But it is doubted by many if he was the first Gentile convert. Paul had been converted some five years before the time of the conversion of Cornelius. He had gone from Damascus into Arabia for three years. (Gal. 1: 17,18.) Whether he had preached, and to whom he had preached, we do not know, though we can hardly think of him spending three years without preaching Christ. But at least the case of Cornelius was selected by the Lord to demonstrate his willingness to accept Gentiles, that they were included in the great commission, and that the gospel was to be preached to them, and they were to be admitted into the fellowship of the church the same as Jews. It is also significant that Peter was selected to take the gospel to Cornelius. He was the first to preach the gospel to the Jews on Pentecost, and now he is made the bearer of good news to the Gentile world.

Golden Text Explained

1. The Middle Wall of Partition.

This expression clearly alludes to the wall dividing the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews in the temple area. If we speak of the temple as the holy place and the most holy place, of course, no one was allowed there except the priests in the holy place and the high priest in the most holy place. But if we use the word temple to include a larger area, as is done many times, it will include both the court of Israel and that of the Gentiles. Between these courts was a wall of partition, beyond which Gentiles were not allowed. Jews went closer to the holy place than Gentiles were allowed. In the verse following our text we are told what this middle wall of partition is and how Jesus broke it down. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." The law of Moses, especially the ceremonial division from which Gentiles were excluded, was like the wall between the courts, and kept Jews separated from all other people. This favor

of God towards the Jews gave them a feeling of superiority, and caused them to be proud and haughty. At the same time it engendered hatred and scorn in the hearts of Gentiles for the Jews. When Christ took away the law (Col. 2: 14), he removed this cause of pride in the Jew and hatred on the part of the Gentile. The breaking of the middle wall of partition denoted that Gentiles were just as near to God as were the Jews. It meant that Jews had no better access to God than Gentiles; they were on equal footing.

2. Christ is Our Peace. (1) He is our peace between Jew and Gentile, making them one in the church. Christ was a stumbling block to the Jew who preferred to continue to be proud and exclusive. (1 Cor. 1: 23.) Most of the Jews refused to give up their special privileges in religion, their advantage over the Gentiles. (Rom. 3: 1, 2.) And since they could not accept Christ without giving it up, they rejected him.

(2) Christ is our peace between man and man. He is the Prince of

Peace. The angels sang about peace on earth when he was born. (Luke 2: 14.) Those who accept and love him as they should will be at peace among themselves. (James 3: 17, 18; Rom. 12: 18-21.) And if trouble arises between brethren, the quickest way to settle it is to bring all who are involved to the foot of his cross, and let them look at each other and their differences through Christ and his suffering on the cross. "Bring men around the same cross; fill them with love to the same Redeemer, and give them the same hope of heaven, and you put a period to alienation and strife. . . . The feeling that we are redeemed by the same blood, and that we have the same Saviour, will unite the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the high and the low, in the ties of brotherhood, and make them feel that they are one." (Barnes.)

Exposition of the Text

I. Speech of Cornelius (Acts 10: 30-33)

Four days ago, until this hour. The four days are accounted for in this way: the first was the day on which the angel appeared to Cornelius, and the messengers started; the second day the messengers came to Joppa, where they lodged with Peter over night; the third day was consumed in travel back from Joppa toward Caesarea; and on the fourth day Peter arrived to find Cornelius with his family and friends waiting for him.

The ninth hour of prayer. Cornelius was said to be a devout man, one who prayed to God always. This may mean that he observed all the hours of prayer, which were five during the day, beginning at 6 in the morning and ending at 6 in the evening, three hours apart.

A man stood before me. In verse

3 Luke says it was an angel, so we conclude that it was a heavenly messenger in human form to make himself visible to Cornelius. The clothing of this angel was bright, reminding us of the brightness of the angel's clothing in Matt. 28: 3.

Thy prayer is heard, etc. The fact that his prayer was heard and his alms were had in remembrance before God prior to the time he be-

(3) Christ is our peace with God. "And might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2: 16.) In the death of Christ for us, the sinless dying for the sinner, the love of God is manifested. Beholding such love, we are led to love him because he first loved us. (1 John 4: 19.) In the death of Christ for our sins, we are shown the justice of God in the punishment for sin. Beholding such severe punishment, we are encouraged to flee to him to escape the punishment which will be visited upon us if we reject Christ. In this way the death of Christ causes man to become reconciled to God; to cease hating and disobeying God, and to live for him. So peace and reconciliation are brought about by the cross, by his death on the cross, and by his blood which was shed on the cross in his death.

came a Christian has bothered people. What was his standing before God at that time? Was he in a lost or saved condition? If his prayers and alms were acceptable to God, why become a member of the church? To avoid this difficulty some have said that the patriarchal law, under which all people were before the law of Moses was given, was still in force for Gentiles; and since Cornelius was a devout man according to this law, he was in a state of acceptance with God until the gospel was preached to him. But if he was in a saved condition, how could the angel tell him Peter would speak words by which he would be saved? (Acts 11: 14.) And the idea that the patriarchal law was still in force was established by scripture. Christ is the end of law for justification (Rom. 10: 4), and this word law includes all law, not just the law of Moses.

Forthwith I sent for thee. The soldier in Cornelius would cause him to obey orders immediately, so no time was lost in getting messengers started for Peter. But there was also another reason for quick action—his soul was at stake. He wished to be right with God, and if by sending for Peter he could learn what to do, there must be no delay. If all were

as quick to respond to give proper care to their souls this would be a better world.

We are all here present. The *we* of this statement includes not only the immediate family of Cornelius, but his kinsmen and his near friends. (Acts 10: 24.) Christians might well follow this good example in gathering their kinsmen and friends to hear the gospel preached. This can be done not only by taking them to public gatherings, but they can be gathered in homes where the word of God can be taught as effectively as from the pulpit.

All things that have been commanded. Cornelius said they were gathered to hear what God had commanded. They were not gathered to hear a book review, a political lecture, or how the current system of philosophy can make this a better world. Cornelius would have had little interest in many sermon subjects as announced in our papers for the various pulpits.

II. Peter's Sermon (Acts 10: 34-43)

God is no respecter of persons. This lesson Peter had just learned, and it took a miracle to convince him of the truth of it. (Acts 10: 9-16.) How was it possible for Peter to preach what he did on Pentecost (Acts 2: 39), and continue to preach the gospel for ten years without knowing that God is not a respecter of persons? This was a hard lesson for Jews to learn, and not many of them ever learned it. That Gentiles can come to God without circumcision Paul called the "stumbling-block of the cross." (Gal. 5: 11.)

Faureth him and worketh righteousness. Since God's commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119: 172), this is equal to fearing God and keeping his commandments. (Eccl. 12: 13.) Those who think they are saved without any works of any kind have difficulty with this verse, as well as others. (Gal. 5: 6; James 2: 18-24.) True, man is not saved by works, such works as merit his salvation (Rom. 3: 28; 4: 4, 5); but that he can be saved without the works Peter mentions here is certainly not true. This however, should not lead anyone to think he can live such a good and useful life that he can be saved without accept-

ing Jesus Christ. Such works do not have any merit to atone for sins; only the death of Jesus does that, and only those who accept him can enjoy the benefits of his death.

The word which he sent. Peter begins his sermon by referring to the preparation made by John the Baptist, and the preaching of Jesus following the work of John. He suggests that Cornelius had some knowledge of the personal ministry of Jesus. Philip had lived in Caesarea (Acts 8: 40; 21: 8), and may be responsible for Cornelius having heard some of this. Peter says this word was sent to the children of Israel, but adds that Christ is Lord of all, not merely the Jews.

God anointed him with the Holy Spirit. It was according to prophecy that he was anointed. (Luke 4: 18, 21.) He was given the Spirit without measure. (John 3: 34.) Both of these statements probably refer to the descent of the Spirit at his baptism. (Matt. 3: 16.) And in the power of the Spirit he is said to have accomplished his works, doing good, healing the sick, and casting out demons.

Whom also they slew. Peter does not fail to tell of the death and the resurrection of Christ. They slew, but God raised him up. Thus in few words we are reminded of the betrayal, trial, condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus, and of God's reversal of man's judgment by raising him from the dead to die no more.

Unto witnesses chosen of God. Peter says Christ was not manifested after his resurrection to all men, but to chosen witnesses. But since there were over five hundred of them (1 Cor. 15: 6), there were plenty to establish the fact in the mind of all who are fair. He mentions the fact that they ate and drank with him after his resurrection, so their faith does not rest in momentary glances, in dark places, and under unfavorable circumstances.

And he charged us to preach. This likely refers to the great commission, but attention is here called to the *charge* to preach the gospel. As long as time shall last it will be the duty of the church to preach; it is the first and most important duty of the church. It is well to feed the poor, but better to preach Christ to them

to save their souls. The feeding may be used to get their attention to the gospel, but we must not lose sight of the duty to preach the gospel.

All the prophets bear witness. "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24: 27.) "These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24: 44.)

Every one that believeth. From this verse many have concluded that one may be saved by "faith only," because faith is the only thing mentioned. If that be true, we may conclude that when salvation is predicated upon any one thing in any one verse, we are to infer that one can be saved by doing that one thing alone. This proves too much for two reasons. (1) If one is saved by faith only because it is the only thing mentioned, one can be saved without repentance, because it is not mentioned in the verse. It is not enough to say that it is taught elsewhere, for this would open the door for a number of things as conditions of salvation which would help ruin the theory of salvation by faith only. (2) If one may be saved by faith only because it is the only thing mentioned in that verse, and if that means that when salvation is predicated upon one thing in any one verse, one may be saved by that one thing alone we may conclude that we can be saved by "baptism only," for Peter says baptism saves us (1 Pet. 3: 21), and nothing else is mentioned in the verse, not even faith. So we conclude that Peter did not teach Cornelius that he would be saved by faith only.

III. Coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10: 44)

The Holy Spirit fell on them. Lack of space forbids a full explanation of this verse. But let us notice, first, some things the Holy Spirit did not do for Cornelius. It did not come to save him, for Peter was to tell him words whereby he would be saved. (Acts 11: 14.) The word is able to

save. (James 1: 21.) We are begotten by the word. (1 Pet. 1: 23.) Next, the Holy Spirit did not come upon him to sanctify him, for we are sanctified by the word of God. (John 17: 17.) It was not given Cornelius to purify his heart, for that was done by his faith. (Acts 15: 9.)

Now let us see reasons why the Holy Spirit was given Cornelius before his baptism. First, the Spirit, was given to Gentiles to convince the Jews that Gentiles had a right to be members of the Lord's church. "Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" (Acts 10: 47.) And since God gave them the same gift he gave the apostles, Peter says he could not withstand God. (Acts 11: 17.) Second, the Holy Spirit was given Cornelius to assure the Gentiles themselves of their acceptance with God. Peter said God bare them (Gentiles) witness, giving them the Holy Spirit. (Acts 15: 8.) The fact that Cornelius received the Spirit before his baptism is taken by many to mean that he was in Christ and a saved man before his baptism. If this be true, why was he baptized? It was not to get into the denomination of his choice, for there were none. Again, if he was saved before his baptism, he was saved out of Christ. Paul says we are baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) Since, according to Paul, Cornelius was baptized into Christ, if he was saved before his baptism into Christ, he had redemption through the blood of Christ before he came into Christ. (Eph. 1: 7.) Paul says salvation is in Christ. (2 Tim. 2: 10.) Since he was baptized into Christ, he could not have salvation before being baptized into Christ where salvation is enjoyed. He was given the Holy Spirit before his baptism because Peter would not have baptized him without this visible manifestation of God's willingness to accept Gentiles into the church. One might as well argue that the miracle of Acts 10: 9-16 could have been used after his baptism as to argue that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit should have been reserved until after his baptism.

Topics for Discussion

1. How much of Jewish exclusiveness was justified by the law of Moses? The law forbade intermarriage, but did it give them the right to think they were better than Gentiles? The right to think they would be saved because they were Jews and that Gentiles would be lost because they were not of the stock of Abraham?

2. Does the fact that God heard the prayer of Cornelius prove that one out of Christ may pray for what

he wishes the same as one in Christ? May this be used to teach that God will hear the prayer of a sincere seeker asking for light and understanding of the will of God that he may obey God? (Matt. 5: 6; John 7: 17.)

3. Peter says Jews and Gentiles are saved by grace "in like manner." (Acts 15: 11.) Can you show from Acts 2 and Acts 10' and 11 that Cornelius obeyed the gospel just like the people did on the day of Pentecost?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is the meaning of the word Gentile?

What caused the word to have an odious connotation?

What effect does Christianity have on such distinctions?

Can we be sure that Cornelius was the first Gentile convert?

What distinction does Peter have in this connection?

Golden Text Explained

What in the temple does the term "middle wall of partition" suggest?

What was the middle wall of partition mentioned in our text?

When and how was this wall of partition broken down?

What is implied in the breaking down of • the middle wall of partition?

How did Christ make peace between Jew and Gentile?

Why is Jesus called the Prince of Peace?

How does Christ bring peace between us and our fellow man?

How does the death of Christ bring peace between us and God?

Speech of Cornelius

Account for the four days between the visit of the angel and Peter's visit.

What does it mean to pray always?

How many hours of prayer were observed by the Jews?

Does the fact that God heard his prayer mean that he was a saved man? Why?

What was the standing of Cornelius before God at this time?

What shows the interest of Cornelius in his soul?

How was his interest others manifested?

How may we show such interest in others? Are we obligated to do so?

What did Cornelius say they wished to hear from Peter?

Peter's Sermon

What lesson had Peter learned about God? How did he learn it?

What was the stumbling-block of the cross?

What is meant by fearing God?

What is meant by working righteousness?

How might Cornelius have known something of Jesus and his work?

When was Jesus anointed with the Holy Spirit? In what measure?

When is mention made in the sermon of the death and resurrection of Jesus?

What charge did Peter say Jesus gave and when?

How did the prophets bear witness of Jesus and his work?

What is said of everyone that believeth in Jesus?

Give two reasons why this verse does not teach salvation by faith only.

Coming of the Holy Spirit

Name some things the Holy Spirit did not do for Cornelius.

What did the coming of the Spirit on Cornelius do for the Jews?

What did the coming of the Spirit do for Cornelius? All other Gentiles?

What false doctrine is based on the fact that Cornelius received the Spirit before he was baptized?

Discuss two or three ways suggested in our lesson to answer this false doctrine.

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XI—March 12, 1950

THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN ANTIOCH

The Lesson Text

Acts 11: 19-30

19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Ste'-phen travelled

as far as Phoe-ni'-ci-a, and Cy'-prus, and An'-ti-oeh, speaking the word to none save only to Jews.

20 But there were some of them, men of Cy-prus and Cy-re-ne, who, when they were come to An'-ti-och, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Je'-sus.

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

22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Je-ru'-sa-lem: and they sent forth Bar'-na-bas as far as An'-ti-och:

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

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

25 And he went forth to Tar'-sus to seek for Saul;

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

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

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

29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Ju-dae'-a:

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11: 26b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—(Acts 1: 6-8.)

Daily Bible Readings

March 6.	M.	Some Leaders in Antioch Church (Acts 13: 1-3)
March 7.	T.	Missionaries Report Back to Antioch (Acts 14: 19-28)
March 8.	W.	Rejoicing in Antioch Church (Acts 15: 30-35)
March 9.	T.	Two Missionary Teams Sent Out (Acts 15: 36-40)
March 10.	F.	The Gospel Goes to Europe (Acts 16: 6-14)
March 11.	S.	Gospel Preached in All Creation (Col. 1: 19-23)
March 12.	S.	The Word of Faith to All (Rom. 10: 8-21)

TIME.—A.D. 42 and 43.

PLACE.—Antioch.

PERSONS.—Barnabas, Saul, and the Christians at Antioch.

Introduction

Connected with the labors of the apostle Paul two cities by the name of Antioch are mentioned. One is Antioch of Pisidia, a city in about the central part of what we now know as Turkey. This was the farthest point both north and west reached by Paul and his company on their first missionary tour. (Acts 13: 14ff.) The other city is the one about which we study at this time, Antioch in Syria. It was founded in 300 B.C. by Seleucus Nicator, and named in honor of his father, Antiochus. In 64 B.C. this city became the capital of the Roman province of Syria. It is commonly considered to have been third in importance in the Roman Empire, only Rome and Alexandria being

greater. At that time it was the gateway to the East, situated in a wonderful climate, and composed of a cosmopolitan population. "For the most part, its population was a worthless rabble of Greeks and Orientals," says one historian, though it is known also that there were so many Jews in the city that they were given equal freedom with the Greeks, being "governed by their own ethnarch."

Another importance of this city from our point of view is the fact that it became the second capital of Christianity. Jerusalem was the central city until the persecution led by Saul came, and when preachers were scattered some of them went as far

north as Antioch. Here they preached to the Greeks, converted many of them, and so started the first great Gentile church of which we have any knowledge. And since two of the greatest characters of which we know were connected with this church, there is little wonder that this church was able to become the center of the greatest Christian activities in the

world at that time. The coming of Barnabas and Saul to Antioch, and their connection with that church, turned the spotlight on it as nothing else could. Their connection with any other church might have done the same thing for it; but here we have the happy combination of a great church with great missionaries, so great results were bound to follow.

Golden Text Explained

1. The Origin of the Name. By whom the disciples were first called Christians is a very difficult problem to solve. But we may be sure the Jews did not give them this name, for they would never connect the name of Anointed with a sect so despised by them. The Jews called the followers of Jesus Nazarenes (Acts 24: 5), and since nothing good ever came out of Nazareth it was a term of reproach. But in the mind of a Jew there could be no reproach in a name which included Christ, Messiah, Anointed. Since the church was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, they could not be referred to by the public as either Jews or Gentiles. So there are some who think the public gave the church members this name simply for the sake of distinguishing them from other groups. They could not be called Jews, Greeks, or Romans; none of these names would fit, so since they honored Christ in preaching, worship, and everyday life and conversation, the public simply gave them the name Christian.

Then there is the idea suggested by the Greek word translated *were called*, which is that they *were divinely called*. The Greek word is defined as follows: *to transact business, have dealings with; a divine warning, advise; a divine monition, communication*. The word is translated *warned of God* in a number of passages. (Matt. 2: 12; Acts 10: 22; Heb. 8: 5; 11: 7.) This use of the word has led many to conclude that its meaning here is that the disciples *were called of God*, or *divinely named*, Christians. However the word is used when it does not have this meaning (Rom. 7: 3) where Paul says, "She shall be called an adulteress." If the name is God-given we may conclude that it came through

inspired men, of whom there were a number in the church at Antioch.

2. The Meaning of the Name. The central idea in the word, of course, is Christ, and suggests that the wearer of the name is one who believes in and lives like Christ. For one to wear the name, and to live worthily of the name, is to honor Christ. We are related to him as the wife is to her husband. (Eph. 5.) For a wife to refuse to wear the name of her husband is a great dishonor; so those who belong to Christ dishonor him when they refuse to wear his name. But for a wife not merely to refuse to wear her husband's name, but to wear the name of some other man is an insult; so when we not only refuse to wear the name of Christ, but wear the name of some man, we offer insult to him who died for us.

Again, wearing the name Christian is a constant reminder to us that we belong to Christ, and that we are redeemed by him and kept from the evil one by him, so are obligated to honor him and praise him for his goodness. It serves to keep us faithful to him by keeping him constantly before us, and in our minds. Every time a wife tells others her name, or every time others call her by the name of her husband which she wears, she is reminded that she belongs to the man who gave her that name. So those who belong to Christ are reminded of him to whom they belong every time they confess to being Christians.

Next, when we wear worthily the name of Christ it suggests that we are his, he is ours, and we are heir to all that belongs to him. The wife not only shares with her husband now what belongs to him, but she is heir to his wealth. So those who wear the name of Christ in a worthy manner may share, now, the vast

wealth, and honor, and power of him whose name they wear: and when this life is over, they have the assurance they may enjoy with him all that heaven means to him and his. Being a Christian means belonging to Christ, and being his means more of genuine peace, honor, glory, and happiness than mortal mind can grasp.

Exposition of the Text

I. Church Established at Antioch (Acts 11: 19-21)

They that were scattered. This refers us back to the first part of the eighth chapter of Acts where we are told of the persecution which started with the stoning of Stephen, and which was led by the zealous Saul of Tarsus. There we were told that the church in Jerusalem was scattered abroad, and went about preaching. The first work of interest was that of Philip in Samaria, and the next was the conversion of the Ethiopian nobleman. Then the march of events in spreading the gospel was broken into by the conversion of the leader of the persecution. And next we have a record of the conversion of Cornelius, whose case God chose to demonstrate the fact that Gentiles are acceptable to him the same as the Jews, and that they are included in the great commission as well as the Jews. This record was necessary in the development of Luke's narrative as he wished to tell next of the establishment and growth of the great Gentile church in Antioch.

Phoenicia, and Cyprus. Phoenicia was a small country north of Palestine, bordering the Mediterranean Sea on the east. Jesus visited it when he talked with the Canaanitish woman near Tyre and Sidon. (Matt. 15: 21ff.) The little country was only twenty-eight miles long; its greatest width was about five miles; and the average width said to be about one mile, yet it occupied a prominent place among the nations of the world for a long time. Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, sixty miles from the Syrian coast and forty-five miles south of the coast of Asia Minor. In size the island is said to be about three times the size of Rhode Island, or approximately thirty-five hundred square miles in area. It was to be

"He who lives according to the import of this name is the most blessed and eminent of mortals. The name shall be had in remembrance when the names of royalty shall be remembered no more, and when the appellations of nobility shall cease to amuse or to dazzle the world." (Albert Barnes.)

the scene of some of Paul's first missionary work. (Acts 14: 4ff.)

Cyrene. Men of Cyrene are said to have preached the gospel to Greeks. This Cyrene was the principal city of a small district in north Africa just south of the island of Crete, and connected politically with Crete. It was colonized by Greeks, and yet there was a big settlement of Jews there who were extended unusual privileges by Ptolemy. This city was represented in Jerusalem on Pentecost. (Acts 2: 10.) These men's work is contrasted with that of the men who are mentioned in verse 19, who preached only to Jews. We are not told why the difference, but the reason Luke records it is obvious.

A great number that believed turned. The Lord was with these men who preached to Greeks, and their efforts brought results. From this statement we conclude (1), that one must believe before one can turn to the Lord, but that one can believe and never turn to the Lord. It is said that a *great number* of them that believed turned. That suggests a majority, so there was a *small number* of them that believed who did not turn to the Lord. Here we have found believers who did not turn to the Lord. No one can be saved unless and until that one turns to the Lord. (Isa. 55: 6, 7.) Hence here are believers who were not saved. Those who think people are saved by faith only, or at the point of faith, must show how one can be saved before and without turning to the Lord. (2) The act of turning to the Lord here is the same we find in Acts 3: 19, where people were told to repent and turn again. Repentance is one thing, and turning to the Lord is another. In Acts 2: 38, we have *repentance, baptism, and remission of sins* in that order; here we have *repentance, turn again, and sins blotted*, and in that order. The verses are parallel. Hence

turn again of Acts 3: 19 is baptism of 2: 38. That is what is meant by turning to the Lord in our text. Many that believed turned to the Lord, or were baptized into Christ. Some who believed refused to do it for various reasons. But those who were baptized into Christ were saved, added to the church, received redemption through his blood (Eph. 1: 7); while those who believed and refused to turn to the Lord, or be baptized into him, were not added to the church, were not in Christ, and denied all the blessings said to be in Christ.

II. Workers Added to Antioch Church (Acts 11: 22-26)

They sent forth Barnabas. When the report of the establishment of the church at Antioch reached the church at Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent. We have heard of him before. It was he who gave so generously for the support of the needy in Jerusalem. (Acts 4: 36, 37.) There we are told that he was a man of Cyprus, and that he was a Levite. The next time we hear of him, he is befriending Paul who had just returned from Arabia to Jerusalem. The last time brethren at Jerusalem knew anything for certain about Saul he was persecuting the church, so his claim to be a Christian was challenged. Barnabas used his influence to get the brethren to receive Paul. (Acts 9: 26, 27.)

Had seen the grace of God. Grace means favor. Barnabas could not see the grace of God, but he could see what had been accomplished through the grace of God. Gentiles who had been separated from God, and from the covenant, and without hope in the world (Eph. 2), were now the people of God and enjoying the blessings of God in Christ. And Barnabas was big enough in soul to be glad about it. There were many Jews in the church at that time who were not big enough, who did not understand the gospel well enough, and who were too prejudiced against the uncircumcised to be glad that a church was established among them.

He exhorted them all. His name means "Son of exhortation" (Acts 4: 36), so he was well qualified to exhort them. People are forgetful, and so are easy to become discouraged, so need to be exhorted often to keep them in the right way.

With purpose of heart. This word translated *purpose* is the same word used with reference to the eternal purpose in the mind of God with reference to our salvation. (Rom. 8: 28; Eph. 1: 11; 2 Tim. 1: 9.) It means a fixed determination, a plan of action determined upon, with the intention of following it. The fact that it is of the heart indicates that it is not merely a mental process, but of the whole heart, the emotions and will power, as well as the mind. Too many people go along wherever the stream of daily events takes them, they are drifting along; but those who cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart defy the trend of the stream and make for the point they have determined in their hearts to reach.

For he was a good man. That is about all that can be said for a man. When brethren look for a preacher, they sometimes look for eloquence in the pulpit, or a good mixer among the civic leaders, or one popular with the young people, or one who has a reputation for building up some particular department of the work. They often overlook this quiet, simple quality of goodness. And the effectiveness of this quality is often overlooked. It is true that a man may be good and still not be able to do certain things in the church, but regardless of what abilities a man may have, if they be not flavored by old-fashioned goodness, his effectiveness is largely counteracted.

People added unto the Lord. Nothing is said about people joining a denomination of their choice; they were added to the Lord.

Went to Tarsus for Saul. No doubt Barnabas was influenced by the Holy Spirit to do this, though it could be accounted for on purely natural grounds. All knew of his ability and his zeal, and believing that he had been thoroughly converted, Barnabas knew Saul would make a great preacher and worker in the church. Hence he went to Tarsus. This was a city of Asia Minor, not very far northwest of Antioch. The advantages politically and educationally enjoyed by Saul in his early life can be learned by reading a good Bible Dictionary.

And taught much people. Paul and Barnabas were with the church at Antioch for a year, we are told,

and used their time to good advantage and taught many people the truth. It was during this time that the name Christian was given to disciples. The name Christian is mentioned here, in Acts 26: 28; and 1 Pet. 4: 16 only. It probably is referred to in James 2: 7.

III. Alms Sent to Judaea (Acts 11: 27-30)

Prophets from Jerusalem. The word prophet comes from two words which mean to speak for. So one who speaks for God is his prophet. But the gift of prophecy, imparted by laying on of apostle's hands, was necessary before one could prophesy. (1 Cor. 12: 10; Acts 8: 18.) Paul says those who prophesy speak edification, exhortation, and consolation. (1 Cor. 14: 3.) So prophesying did not always mean foretelling future events, though it does in this verse.

One of them named Agabus. We hear again of this man when he told Paul that persecution awaited him in Jerusalem. (Acts 21: 10, 11.) Here he tells of a great famine, which Luke says came in the days of Claudius. Historians tell of a most severe famine in Judaea at a time which agrees with this prophecy. Josephus speaks of it as lasting long enough that two different procurators ruled over Judaea. This Claudius began his reign in A.D. 41; the famine is said to have begun in the fifth

year of his reign, which would date it as A.D. 45, though others say it was in A.D. 44.

Every man according to his ability. When the prophet told of the coming famine, the church made preparations to help. They made plans ahead of time, so were able when the need arose. Churches without plans for the future rarely ever do anything for the present. And the response was unanimous—every man was willing to give. The burden was distributed proportionately, no one bearing more than he should on account of the failure of some. When all do their part, none are burdened.

Sending it to the elders. When money was raised for relief, it was sent to the elders. Some say that elders have charge of the spiritual affairs of the church, but deacons have charge of material affairs. The Bible makes no such distinction. The elders are overseers of the church, and all the activities thereof. The deacons serve under the oversight of the elders. The money was turned over to the elders, and under their supervision deacons made the distribution. Churches today will do well to get back to the New Testament way of letting elders be the overseers of the church, and deacons carrying out the decisions of elders. Trouble has come where deacons have as much voice in church affairs as elders.

Topics for Discussion

1. Barnabas exhorted Christians to cleave to the Lord. If it is impossible for one to fall from grace and be lost, there would be little need to exhort them to cleave to the Lord. But knowing the possibility of falling away, Barnabas exhorted them to hold on faithfully.

2. Paul says that by the fall of the Jews, salvation came to the Gentiles. (Rom. 11: 11.) The change of leadership from Jerusalem to Antioch, from a thoroughly Jewish church to a Gentile church, made possible the preaching of the gospel to the Gentile world. The Jerusalem church,

with its Jewish exclusiveness and determination to hold to Jewish ceremonies and bind them upon Gentiles, would never have evangelized the world.

3. Looking ahead and planning the work of the church to be able to take care of all situations as they arise, is the work of a wise eldership. Those who do not plan for the future are not leaders. Those who cannot plan for the future should get out of the way for those who can; and those who will not plan for the future should be put out of the way of men who can and will plan the work, and work their plan.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of Antioch of Syria? Name the first two great centers of Christianity.

What, two great men were connected with the church at Antioch?

Golden Text Explainer]

Why would Jews not call disciples oi Jesus Christians?

What was peculiar about the membership of the church at Antioch?

Would this make a new name more necessary?

What proof can you give that the name Christian came by divine authority?

What does the name Christian suggest with reference to the one who wears it?

Show how it is dishonoring to Christ to refuse to wear the name Christian.

Of what is this name a constant reminder to the one who wears it?

What blessings are attached to this name for those who wear it worthily?

Is there any reason why anybody should not be pleased to wear this name?

Church Established at Antioch

What caused the word to be preached in Antioch?

What do you know of Phoenicia? Of Cyprus and of Cyrene?

Who can turn to the Lord?

Is it possible to believe and not turn to the Lord?

What blessing is promised those who turn to the Lord?

Can you show that Acts 3: 19, and Acts

2: 38, and this verse are parallel in their teaching on what one must do to be saved?

Workers Added To Antioch Church

Whom did the Jerusalem church send to Antioch?

What do you know of Barnabas?

Had he ever met Saul of Tarsus and when?

In what way could Barnabas see the grace of God?

At what work was Barnabas particularly good?

What is meant by a purpose of heart?

What is the importance of being a good man?

To whom were people added at Antioch?

Whom did Barnabas seek as his helper in the work?

What is said of the results of their labors together?

Alms Sent to Judaea

What is a prophet? Do we have such in the church today?

What do you know of the prophet Agabus?

What did the Antioch church do about the predicted famine?

To whom did the Antioch church send their money?

What of the relative work of elders and deacons?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XII—March 19, 1950

HEROD PERSECUTES THE CHURCH

The Lesson Text

Acts 12: 1-9, 16-19.

1 Now about that time Her'-od the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And *those* were the days of unleavened bread.

4 And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Her'-od was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards before the door kept the prison.

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the

side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Her'-od had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded

that they should be put to death. And he went down from Ju-dae'-a to Caes-a-re'-a, and tarried there.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Blessed are ye when men persecute you, and say all manner of evil against (Matt. 5: 11a.)*

shall reproach you, and you falsely, for my sake"

DEVOTIONAL READING.—(Acts 12: 10-15.)

Daily Bible Readings

March 13.	M.....	Herod's Persecution of Jesus (Matt. 2: 1-12)
March 14.	T.....	Another Herod Persecutes John (Matt. 14: 1-12)
March 15.	W.....	Death of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12: 20-23)
March 16.	T.....	Paul Before Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25: 23-27)
March 17.	F.....	Effect of Paul's Sermon on Agrippa (Acts 26: 24-32)
March 18.	S.....	Manifold Trials a Proof of Faith (1 Pet. 1: 3-11)
March 19.	S.....	An Exhortation to Patience in Trial (James 5: 7-11)

TIME.—A.D. 44.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Herod, James, Peter, and other disciples.

Introduction

The family of Herod, though prominent politically, were never found on the side of right in matters of religion. The first one we meet is Herod The Great, who was appointed procurator of Judaea by Julius Caesar as early as 47 B.C. But one difficulty after another arose so that his reign over his territory was disturbed until "by the help of the Romans, he took Jerusalem (37 B.C.), and completely established his authority throughout his dominions." He was a cruel, murderous, ruler who executed any who got in his way. It was this man who killed the children of Bethlehem in an effort to destroy Jesus. The next Herod we meet is called Herod Antipas, son of Herod The Great by a Samaritan wife, Malthace. This is the one who beheaded John the Baptist. (Matt. 14.) The next member of Herod's family is one called Archelaus, also the son of Herod The Great and Malthace. He is mentioned as taking the place of his father in Judaea and was the cause of Joseph taking his family to Nazareth instead of Bethlehem. (Matt. 2: 19-23.) Then

we meet with Herod Philip I (Mark 6: 17), the son of Herod The Great and Mariamne. It was his wife, Herodias, who left him to marry Herod Antipas, which act was condemned by John the Baptist. Next, we have Herod Philip II, who is barely mentioned, as the one for whom the city of Caesarea Philippi was named. (Matt. 16: 13.) Then we meet with Herod Agrippa I, the son of Aristobulus and Berenice, and grandson of Herod The Great. This is the one with whom our present lesson deals. And, last, we meet with Herod Agrippa II, the son of Herod Agrippa I, and great-grandson of Herod The Great. He never married, and his relation with his sister Berenice was the cause of suspicion, as noticed by Josephus and Juvenal. This is the ruler before whom Paul made his defense in Caesarea. (Acts 26.) A study of these rulers will give the student a background for the lesson which will be very helpful. Any good Bible Dictionary or encyclopedia will supply all the information needed.

Golden Text Explained

1. Forms of Suffering. There are different ways of causing people to suffer, and one may be as effective as another. The first mentioned in our text is mental suffering. When people reproach, or revile, us for being Christians there is no physical

suffering caused by it; yet with many this form of suffering is as hard to bear as physical suffering. The word reproach is defined, "To address words, looks, etc. by way of imputing fault, upbraid, blame; censure." The noun is defined, "A cause or occasion

of disgrace or discredit." When people are denied social intercourse with what is looked upon as the best people of the community because of their church membership; and when their children are ridiculed at school and cut off from the social activities of the community because of the religious connection of the parents, it makes a burden most difficult for one to bear. The next form of suffering mentioned in our text is persecution, with the emphasis on the physical side. The word in this place means "to pursue, follow after, as one does a flying enemy ... to vex or oppress one on account of his religion." Saul of Tarsus persecuted by pursuing people even to foreign cities, arresting them, putting them in prison, making them utter words he could construe as blasphemy, and then stoning them to death. Others have been burned at the stake; some were crucified; some were tortured by being put on a wheel and their body torn asunder; and some were tortured by having the skin pulled from the body.

2. **Grounds for Persecution.** Two things are suggested here. First, it is suggested that all reproachful things people may say about us are false. If they can say something against us truthfully, it is time for us to make corrections; but if what they say against us is false, Peter says we are not to be ashamed, but rather to rejoice. (1 Pet. 4: 14-16.) And when we suffer these things we are to remember that we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, and at his coming we will be partakers of his glory. (Rom. 8: 17, 18; 1 Pet. 4: 12, 13.) Second, it is suggested in our text that these sufferings are for the sake of Christ. To do a thing for the sake of Christ is to do it on account of him, because of our relationship to him.

So to bear persecution and reproach for his sake is to bear these things because we are his servants. If we give up Christ and cease to serve him, the persecution will cease. But it is better to suffer with him here and be glorified with him hereafter, than to deny and forsake him here and suffer for such disobedience in eternity. This is the choice all must make, and the amount of persecution one must suffer for his sake determines whether the choice will be easy or difficult to make and keep throughout life.

3. **Blessings Attending Persecution.**

The word *blessed* in our text means *happy*. There is something in reproach and persecution about which we should be happy. Peter tells us that one reason for being happy is that "the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you." (1 Pet. 4: 14.) We do not bear these insults and sufferings alone; the Spirit whom God gives to all who obey him (Acts 5: 32; 1 Cor. 6: 19), bears them with us, and gives us the courage and strength to bear them. Again, there is a purifying influence about such trials, which drives the dross of love for the world and its fame and honor from our hearts. (1 Pet. 1: 6-9.) And, too, strength of soul is gathered from such exercises. The tall pine which grew in the river bottom had little strength to resist the storm; but the tree on the mountain pass which grew up in spite of the storms is strong enough to weather any blast. So the soul that bears sore trials gathers strength from the exercise. And, last, when we bear such trials we give honor and glory to God, and this should be the Christian's greatest joy. We may well be happy, blessed, when we are honoring him who loved us and gave his Son for us.

Exposition of the Text

I. **James and Peter Persecuted**

(Acts 12: 1-5)

Herod the king. This is the one called Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod The Great. His first territory and authority were given him by Caligula. Later he was given more territory by Claudius in Judaea and Samaria, until finally he came to rule over as much territory

as his grandfather, the whole of Palestine. It may be worthy of notice that this was not a general persecution, but an effort to get rid of *certain of the church*. In the following verses these certain people are mentioned, at least two of them.

He killed James the brother of John. This was James the apostle, and is distinguished from another

James the apostle by saying he was the brother of John. In the list of apostles given by Luke (Acts 1: 13), as well as the other writers, these two apostles were kept distinguished one from the other by calling one James the son of Alphaeus. Matthew refers to this one in our lesson as James the son of Zebedee. (Matt. 10: 2.) This man was killed with the sword; he was beheaded. This act was pretty well dated by the fact that this Herod was the only king in Jerusalem for some time who had the authority to execute people. Pilate had such authority, but he was not called a king. "The accuracy of the sacred writer in the expressions which he uses here, is remarkable. There was no portion of time for thirty years before, or ever afterwards, in which there was a king in Jerusalem, a person exercising that authority in Judaea, or to whom that title could be applied, except the last three years of Herod's life, within which period the transaction here recorded took place." (Paley.)

He saw that it pleased the Jews. The character of both the Jews and Herod suffers from this remark. That the death of a righteous man should cause satisfaction to anybody is an indication of an unholy character. Regardless of how widely we may differ from one, we cannot be pleased with his death from natural causes. But when these Jews were pleased with his death by persecution, they betray a depravity of unusual depth. Next, Herod displayed an equal depth of depravity when he was willing to persecute, even unto death, good men to please these Jewish leaders. To some extent his job depended on keeping peace in Palestine, and Jerusalem in particular. The Jews were stubborn in their resistance to Rome, and often gave Roman authorities trouble; and some were removed because of their inability to keep peace in Jerusalem. Human life was so cheap in his sight that he would kill good men to gain the favor of others, and make sure his position.

Days of unleavened bread. This expression refers to the seven days following the Passover, during which the people were to have no leaven in their houses. The origin of this feast and the reasons for it may be

found in Ex. 12. Being a man who sought popular favor, Herod might have selected this time to imprison Peter because there would be many Jews in Jerusalem and it would give Herod an opportunity to show the Jews that he wished to help them preserve their religion as given by the fathers.

Delivered him to four quaternions. The word *quaternion* means four. So there were sixteen soldiers given the duty of watching Peter. The night was divided into four watches, and one quaternion of soldiers were used for each watch of the night. Two of the soldiers were with Peter in the cell, and two were at the door or gate of the prison. He was guarded as if he were the most dangerous criminal. This is mentioned because of the story of escape which is to follow, and to show that the escape could not have been by the stealth or ingenuity of Peter, or by his ability to overpower the guards.

Intending after the Passover. Herod planned to deliver Peter to the people for them to dispose of him as they pleased. They would not defile their hands by dealing with him during the holy week of Passover, but as soon as that was over they would stoop to anything.

II. Peter's Escape from Prison (Acts 12: 6-9)

Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. It was Roman custom to chain each of the prisoner's hands to the hand of a soldier. In this way it was humanly impossible for the prisoner to escape. It was a crime for soldiers to go to sleep on duty, and we may suppose at least that the two on guard at the door did not sleep. But whether the two to whom Peter was chained were asleep, or whether the angel rendered them not conscious of what was taking place are matters for others to guess about.

An angel of the Lord stood by him. Here again we find an angel serving one who shall be heir to salvation. (Heb. 1: 14.) "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psa. 34: 7.) That angels have to deliver by miracles, as in this case, is not true; and that angels deliver those who fear the Lord today from dangers, and preserve them from in-

jury is undoubtedly true. Our prayers for the safety of our children, and those on long hard journeys are meaningless if angels do not do such things.

His chains fell off. All attempts to explain this without admitting a miracle are foolish. Since Luke says he made accurate investigation (Luke 1: 3), and even if we deny his inspiration, we would still have to deal with this miraculous event which an accurate historian says actually took place.

Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. This escape was not a hurried affair. He was told to rise quickly, that is, to lose no time unnecessarily. But he was not to be in such a hurry as to leave any useful clothing. To gird himself meant to tie his girdle over and around the inner garment, or tunic. He would need his sandals for walking, so he was to take time to put them on. The fact that these things were taken is proof that Peter took his time, and was not afraid of being detected by the guards while dressing for travel.

Cast thy garment about thee. This was the long flowing outer garment which was worn over the shoulders as a mantle. It was usually about square and was long enough to protect the body to the waist or a little below.

He thought he saw a vision. Peter's mind was not clear as to what was happening. He knew that James had been killed, and he knew the Jews and Herod would do the same thing to him if they got the chance. Yet he could sleep. This is the peace which the world cannot know and enjoy; it is possible only to those who are at peace with God, and who have become divorced from this world and the love of things material.

III. Visit with Brethren, and Departure (Acts 12: 16-19)

They saw him, and were amazed. In the verses immediately preceding we learn that Peter went to the home of the mother of John Mark, a woman named Mary. There several Christians had gathered and were praying. There seemed nothing else to do. Appeal to authorities was useless. An attempt to overpower the guards would have been suicide, as well as unchristian. If the one persecuted is

to submit joyfully, his friends should not put up a fight. So they prayed. We find Christians praying about all the ordinary, as well as extraordinary, affairs of life. Prayer was more popular in the church then than it is now, and to our shame. We also learn that when a young lady opened the door, or gate, when Peter knocked, she was thought to be mad (insane) for saying that Peter was there. For what were these people praying? Most commentaries say they prayed for Peter's deliverance. If so, they had little faith in their prayers. It seems more reasonable to think they had given up hopes of his escape from prison and were praying that he might remain faithful unto death; that he might not weaken in the face of death and deny his Lord to save his life.

How the Lord brought him forth. It was not until the angel had taken Peter through one street that he realized this was not a vision, but an actual deliverance from prison. (Verse 11.) When he realized it was not a vision, he knew immediately that the Lord had a hand in the deliverance. Things done by angels are said to be done by the Lord. So Peter gave the credit to the Lord.

Tell these things to James. Albert Barnes says this was "James the son of Alphaeus, commonly called the Less," the other apostle who wore that name. Others say this was James the brother of Jesus. But there is a never-ending argument as to whether this James was a brother, half brother, or a cousin to Jesus. Those who contend that he was a cousin have to contend that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a sister named Mary, and that this was her son. This sounds very unlikely. Those who contend that he was a half brother have to affirm that Joseph had children by a wife prior to marrying Mary. Of this there is no evidence at all. It seems better to say that after the birth of Jesus, children were born to Joseph and Mary, and that this James was one of them. (Matt. 13: 55, 56.) But this position is not without its difficulties, as Mary the mother of James the Less is said to be the wife of Clopas. (Mark 15: 40; John 19: 25.) It is interesting to study, but not easy to settle.

Went to another place. Where Peter went is not told. Catholic authorities say he went to Rome, where he remained as Pope until his death. But the fact that Paul longed to visit the church at Rome that he might bestow upon them some spiritual gift (Rom. 1: 11) does not recommend Peter's care of his church very highly. And the fact that Paul would spend two whole years in Rome (Acts 28: 30) without making mention of Peter, added to the fact that he could stay there two years without a visit from the Pope is impossible to believe. So we conclude that Peter did not go to Rome at this time, and if he

ever went there, he did not go as the Pope.

No small stir among the soldiers. Peter was regarded as an important prisoner, or he would not have been so heavily guarded. It was natural that there should be high excitement among the soldiers when one so important had escaped. And the fact that to allow one to escape would cost some soldiers their lives added to the excitement.

Examined the guards. In our day we would say that there was an investigation, maybe a *Congressional investigation*. Those responsible for the prisoner were put to death.

Topics for Discussion

1. It will be well to assign one the duty to make a special study of the Herod family, and to give a short report before the class as to the nationality, religion, and political place and prominence of that family.

2. Another may be assigned the task of making a report of the main explanations of whether James mentioned in verse 17 of our text was the

Lord's brother, or cousin.

3. In the King James version we have the word Easter instead of Passover in verse 4. Some one may be assigned the duty of making a report as to the origin of Easter, and how that word got into our King James version of the Bible. Clarke's Commentary and Barnes' Notes will be of help on this point.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of Herod the Great?

Name and identify the others of that family mentioned in this lesson.

Did they make any contribution to religion?

Golden Text Explained

Name two types of suffering suggested by our text.

What is the meaning of reproach? How effective is it as a means of persecution?

To what extent have people suffered physically in persecution?

What is suggested in our text as to the truth or falsity of the reproach?

In what are we partakers with Christ?

What is meant by suffering for the sake of Christ?

What is the meaning of the word blessed?

Explain the first reason given for being happy about persecution.

Explain the purifying influence of trials.

How do trials cause us to be stronger spiritually?

How do we honor God in suffering trials?

James and Peter Persecuted

What do you know about this Herod?

Did this Herod instigate a general persecution of the church?

Which James did Herod kill and how did he kill him?

How is this act of Herod dated?

What is said which indicates the ungodly character of the Jews?

What do we gather concerning Herod's character?

What is meant by the days of unleavened bread?

Why would this festive week be a good time to kill Peter?

Why would not the Jews wish to have part in it during that week?

Peter's Escape from Prison

How many soldiers guarded Peter? What is the meaning of quaternion?

How was Peter guarded for safety through the night?

What part did the angel play in this deliverance?

Around whom do angels encamp and is such true today?

Name as many things as you can in connection with this escape that were miraculous.

How is Luke's reputation as a historian involved in this case?

How do we know that Peter's escape was not a hurried affair?

Describe the various garments mentioned in this lesson.

What did Peter think was happening to him?

What about the peace and calm of one in Peter's situation?

Visit with Brethren and Departure

What were Peter's friends doing for him?

What do you think they were praying for?

To whom did Peter ascribe the praise for his deliverance?

To whom did Peter wish this escape told and why specify him?

Can you identify this James? Distinguish between him and the apostles by that name.
What about the idea that Peter went from Jerusalem to Rome?

What effect did this escape have on the soldiers?
What became of those who were guarding Peter?
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XIII—March 26, 1950
PAUL BEGINS HIS WORK

The Lesson Text

Acts 13: 1-13

1 Now there were at An-ti-och, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Bar-na-bas, and Sym'e-on that was called Ni-ger, and Lu-cius of Cy-re-ne, and Man-a-en the foster-brother of Her-od the tetrarch, and Saul.
2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Bar-na-bas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.
3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Se-leu-ci-a; and from thence they sailed to Cy-prus.
5 And when they were at Sal-a-mis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.
6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Pa-phos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Je-sus;
7 Who was with the proconsul, Ser-gi-us Pau-lus, a man of under-

standing. The same called unto him Bar-na-bas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God.
8 But El'-y-mas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith.
9 But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him,
10 And said, O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?
11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.
12 Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.
13 Now Paul and his company set sail from Pa-phos, and came to Per'-ga in Pam-phyl'-i-a: and John departed from them and returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles"* (Acts 22: 21.)
DEVOTIONAL READING.—(Acts 13: 44-49.)

Daily Bible Readings

- March 20. M.....Paul Reports Work Among Gentiles (Acts 15: 12-21)
March 21. T.....Paul Turned from Jews to Gentiles (Acts 18: 5-11)
March 22. W.....Paul's Effort to Conciliate Jews (Acts 21: 17-26)
March 23. T.....Preaches to Gentiles in Rome (Acts 28: 23-28)
March 24. F.....Paul a Minister to Gentiles (Rom. 15: 8-21)
March 25. S.....Paul and Barnabas Sent to Gentiles (Gal. 2: 1-10)
March 26. S. A Prisoner in Behalf of Gentiles (Eph. 3: 1-13)

TIME.—A.D. 45.
PLACES.—Antioch, Cyprus, and Asia Minor.
PERSONS.—Paul, Barnabas, John Mark, Bar-Jesus, and Sergius Paulus.

Introduction

With this lesson we begin the study of the greatest missionary efforts this world has ever known. We are given the history of the work of one church, and, to a great extent, one man. We often think there are few churches and preachers today who are interested in preaching the gospel to "the whole creation," and showing their interest by doing something about it. But so far as we are able to learn from the New Testament, there were not many churches of the first century doing anything about the work. The church in Jerusalem did little until it was scattered by persecution, and its members forced to go elsewhere to find homes. No doubt the other apostles were faithful in the preaching of the gospel, yet they were not as busily engaged as was Paul, for he said he labored more abundantly than they. (1 Cor. 15:

10.) The church at Thessalonica "sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth" (1 Thess. 1: 8), but they did not have such a program as did the church at Antioch. If all churches had been as active in the work as was the church

at Antioch, and if all preachers of the gospel had been as willing as was Paul to "spend and be spent" in preaching the gospel, the world could have been taken for Christ. So today there are few churches which have commendable missionary programs, and there are few preachers of the gospel who seem as willing as Paul to be used of the Lord; and though there is more missionary activity in the church today than has been since the days of Paul, there is very little compared with what there would be if every church would take Antioch for its pattern, and every preacher would take Paul for his pattern. Sending a few dollars here, and a few more there, is not a real missionary program; yet many churches are satisfied with doing just that. If each preacher would hold one meeting each year in a community where there is no congregation, and if each church would finance one meeting each year in those states where are few, or no, churches, missionary activity would be multiplied many times, and growth both at home and abroad would exceed anything we have seen yet. Without such activity there will be little growth.

Golden Text Explained

1. The Command. The language of our text is that of Paul himself, when he was making his defense before the mob in Jerusalem. He told of his conversion, and his return to Jerusalem to preach, and how the people refused to hear him. While praying in the temple, he saw the Lord, in a trance, saying to him to leave quickly. Paul was inclined to argue the matter with the Lord, saying the people know how he had persecuted the church; but in spite of this the Lord commanded him to get out of the city. This command to get away from his early surroundings reminds us of the command that came to Abraham to get out of Ur, his native land, to go into a land unknown to him. Abraham obeyed, not knowing where he was going; and Paul obeyed the Lord, not knowing where his obedience would lead him, nor what sufferings he would be called on to bear. Both of them invested all they had in the venture of faith. Neither

of them ever looked back with regret for the decision to make that investment. Their investments paid big dividends, not in lands and money and stocks and bonds, but in "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for them, "where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." (1 Pet. 1: 4; Matt. 6: 20.) Is it possible that some of us have heard the call in our hearts, but have allowed the comforts, joys, and pleasures of this world to keep us from responding? With one consent we begin to make excuses, such as, We have a business to operate; We have family duties which make such work as Paul did impossible.

2. The Response. Jesus was despised and rejected by the Jews. The Gentiles were hated by the Jews. Paul was sent to preach Christ to these people. He called himself "an

apostle of Gentiles." (Rom. 11: 13.) He gloried in this ministry of preaching a despised Saviour to an accursed people. What did the response to do such work cost Paul? First, he had no home. Not many of us are willing to leave the community where we were reared because of kindred and friends, though we can take wife and children along, but Paul did a work which made it necessary to deny himself such pleasures. Next, this work cost him much in physical suffering. (2 Cor. 11: 21-29.) He was persecuted for preaching Christ at all; but in addition to that, he was persecuted by his own brethren for preaching Christ to Gentiles and receiving them without circumcision. (Gal. 5: 11; Acts 21: 21, 27-36.) He called himself a prisoner of Christ on behalf of the Gentiles. (Eph. 3: 1.) And finally he was beheaded because he preached the gospel to Gentiles. So faithful was he to the command to go where the Lord needed him, and to preach what the Lord revealed to him, that he not only was a prisoner, but suffered death to the satisfaction of his enemies who rejoiced that he was finally silenced.

Exposition of the Text

I. Missionaries Appointed (Acts 13: 1-3)

Prophets and teachers. These are two classes of servants in the church which functioned for the perfecting of the saints. (Eph. 4: 11, 12.) Hackett says that the word prophet is the specific term, while teacher is the generic, and that the prophets were all teachers, but not all teachers were prophets. There is an element of truth in that, especially if we use the word prophet to mean one who foretold the future; but since Paul says the prophets edified, exhorted, and consoled (1 Cor. 14: 3), we must conclude that it was not always the specific term. Prophecy was one of the nine gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 4-11), but teaching is not so listed. Paul gives prophets and teachers the second and third places in the list of things set in the church. (1 Cor. 12: 28.) All prophets were inspired; they spoke for God, as the Spirit moved them. But not all teachers were inspired. Some were to show themselves approved of God,

3. Character Necessary for Response. Not every man could respond to the command of our text. This reminds us of the rich ruler whom Jesus commanded to sell all he had and give to the poor. (Matt. 19: 21.) This man thought Jesus demanded too much; the price of discipleship was too high. But Paul had enough faith in God to believe that he would be given food and raiment, and he was sufficiently divorced from the world that he could be content with such. (1 Tim. 6: 6-10.) Too many of us are too much concerned about what will become of us in our old age. A sign along the highway warns that fast drivers are trying to save a minute they never live to enjoy; so we worry about an old age some of us may never live to enjoy. What then will become of all we have hoarded for old age? Will it testify against us in judgment? Will it accuse us of lack of concern for those who never heard the gospel? What if Paul's concern for his happiness in old age had kept him from responding to this call? We need to be more willing to deny ourselves material pleasures to give others spiritual joys.

handling the word of truth aright. (2 Tim. 2: 15.) So we still have teachers in the church, but not prophets.

Symeon Niger. The first part of this name is Jewish, and the last is Roman. The word Niger means *black*, and leads some to think he was an African proselyte, though there is no proof. The first part of his name is considered good proof that he was a Jew.

Lucius of Cyrene. This is thought by some, as Origin, to be Luke, but the Greek names are different. This may be the same person whom Paul calls his kinsman. (Rom. 16: 21.) This Lucius is distinguished from others by his home town. Cyrene was a city of northern Africa. People from this city were present on Pentecost (Acts 2: 10), and men from this city were outstanding missionaries (Acts 11: 20), and no doubt this one was among these last.

Manaen, foster-brother of Herod. The Herod here mentioned is Antipater, who killed John the Baptist. But

the meaning of foster-brother is much in question. One explanation is that it simply means a comrade, associate, one educated with another. The other explanation is based on the meaning of the Greek term which signifies "brought up at the same breast," and Pulpit Commentary adds, "which would indicate that Manaen's mother was wet-nurse to Herod the tetrarch." He no doubt was a Jew, of considerable age, and enjoyed the distinction of having good connections with the ruling family.

Ministered and fasted. The words *they ministered to the Lord* are the translation of one Greek word, from which we get our word *liturgy*, and is used of all divine service and worship. Fasting was common among the early churches, though no set time was given for such.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul. The word *separate* means to *set apart*, or *appoint*. And the appointment was to a work whereunto the Spirit had called them. They were not appointed to the apostleship, as Pulpit Commentary suggests. Paul was appointed to that when Jesus appeared to him. (Acts 26: 16-18.) The separation was not merely to preaching the gospel, for they had already been preaching, and Paul conferred not with flesh and blood about doing that work. (Gal. 1: 15-17.) But it was a separation to preaching in a definite field. Notice the Spirit had already called them to this work, and the church was to appoint, encourage, and support them in the doing of the work.

Prayed and laid their hands on them. This was the manner in which the separation, or appointment, was made. That the laying on of hands imparted anything in the way of spiritual powers is not true. Being an apostle, Paul had more spiritual gifts than the men who laid hands on him. It was simply a manner of designating the person for whom prayer was made, and who was being appointed for the services under consideration. It may or may not be used today; and those who practice it should not be criticized, nor should they criticize others who wish to use some other manner of designating the persons who are appointed for work.

II. Missionaries at Work (Acts 13: 4-13)

Sent forth by the Holy Spirit. In verse 3 we read that the church, or prophets and teachers at Antioch, sent these missionaries away. But here it is said that the Holy Spirit sent them. Both are true. And what the church does today which is authorized by the Lord may be said to be done by the Lord.

Went down to Seleucia. This was a seaport about sixteen miles from Antioch, and near where the Orontes River, on which Antioch is situated, empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

They sailed to Cyprus. This was an island in the Mediterranean Sea, and the homeland of Barnabas. This may have had something to do with determining where their mission efforts would begin. It is not unusual that men like to go back home to preach the gospel to people they know, in spite of the fact that they may have more honor elsewhere. Cyprus is the largest island in the Mediterranean, and produced considerable wine, honey, oil, and wool.

They were at Salamis. This was one of the largest cities on the island. It was on the east end of the island, on a good harbor, and was a noted trading center. "It had a large population of Jews. It was destroyed in the reign of Trajan, in consequence of a terrible insurrection of the Jews, in which they massacred 240,000 of the Gentile population. No Jew was ever after allowed to land in Cyprus." (Pulpit Commentary.) The mention of synagogues (plural) of the Jews indicate a large Jewish population.

Whole island unto Paphos. This town was situated on the western end of the island, and was the home of Venus, "who was here fabled to have risen from the sea."

Whose name was Bar-Jesus. This man is said to have been a Jew, a false prophet, and a sorcerer. The word for sorcerer here is *magus*, the same word used for the wise men who came to see Jesus. (Matt. 2.) These Magi possessed considerable knowledge of the powers and processes of nature and science. Some of them used this knowledge for the good of humanity, but others used this knowledge for self-aggrandize-

ment. This man was of the latter class. The name Bar-Jesus means son of Jesus; Bar is Syriac for son.

The proconsul *Sergius Paulus*. Since the proconsul lived here, we may conclude that Paphos was the capital city of the island. In 27 B.C. Augustus divided the Roman provinces into Senatorial and Imperial. Senatorial provinces were such as were peaceable, and the senate was allowed to appoint rulers over these provinces for a year at a time, "who exercised purely civil functions, had no power over life and death, and was attended by one or more legates." These appointees were called proconsuls. This one is said to have been a man of understanding, and one who wished to hear the gospel. Not many wise and mighty are inclined to hear the gospel (1 Cor. 1: 26), and still fewer of those who hear it are able to practice the self-denial necessary to obey the gospel and live a Christlike life.

Seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. The evil character of this man is manifested in that he not only rejected the gospel, but attempted to turn aside from the faith a man who was interested. Of course there were selfish reasons for this, as the sorcerer enjoyed the confidence, honor, and support of the ruler of the island as long as he could keep him ignorant about God; but as soon as the man learned of God this sorcerer would be cast out. False teachers still try to turn their people from the truth for similar reasons.

Full of all guile and villainy. This is the language of Saul, who is here for the first time called Paul. The word Paul is a Greek word and means *little*. Saul is a Hebrew word and means *asked for, besought*. It was common for men to have two names, and since Saul is no longer connected with a Jewish ministry his Jewish name is dropped, and the Greek name is used to write of his ministry among Gentiles. This is a very strong indictment which Paul makes of this sorcerer. Paul is said to have been filled with the Holy Spirit, which in this case may suggest a direction of the Spirit in what he said. On such short acquaintance one might suspect a man, but it would not be wise to use such strong language without di-

vine guidance. "The word rendered *mischievous (villainy)* denotes properly *facility of acting*, and then *sleight of hand*; sly, cunning arts, by which one imposes on another, and deceives him with a fraudulent intention." (Barnes.)

Thou son of the devil. One who practices the devices of the devil is well called the son of the devil. The devil is the father of lies (John 8: 44), and this deceiver who would turn an honest man from the truth was correctly styled the son of the devil.

Enemy of all righteousness. One who would turn an honest inquirer from the truth would stoop to any unrighteous act if it served his personal advantage. One cannot commit a greater sin against a person than to turn him from the truth, and if one will commit the greatest sin against a person, he will commit the lesser sins.

The hand of the Lord is upon thee. This was said to let the man, and those who saw it, know that his punishment came from the Lord. In this way Paul gave glory to God instead of calling attention to himself. This would demonstrate the power of the God whom Paul preached over that exercised by the sorcerer. It was designed to punish the sorcerer and at the same time impress the proconsul with the truth of the gospel and the power of God. The fact that his sight was taken from him for a season only implied the mercy of God and the chance given the man to repent. Origin says the man did repent.

A mist and a darkness. Some take this to mean that blindness came on him gradually; first as mist, and finally as darkness. These are medical terms used for disease of the eye. (Vincent.) It is interesting to note that Paul inflicted on this man the same thing he suffered when he was turned from his persecuting career. (Acts 9: 8, 9.)

The proconsul believed. It is said that he believed when he saw what was done. That was the purpose of miracles. (Mark 16: 20.) Whether by the term *believed* we are to conclude that the proconsul became a Christian is not clear. He could have believed without being willing to repent, as Agrippa. (Acts 26.) The

fact that he was astonished at the teaching leads us to think that he certainly had a high respect for doctrine backed by such power.

Came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John departed. It should be noticed that now the party is spoken of as "Paul and his company," whereas in verse 2 Barnabas is mentioned first.

Perga was an important city of Asia Minor, north of Cyprus, in the country now called Turkey. Why John Mark left the party at this place is not known, but as we may be sure Paul did not think him justified in doing so, for on this account he refused to include him in his party on the next missionary journey. (Acts 15: 36-41.)

Topics for Discussion

1. To what extent are we bound by the early customs of the church as fasting and the laying on of hands in appointment of workers? Does this mean any more to us than the holy kiss of 1 Cor. 16: 20?

2. Of what importance to us is this example of missionary work being done by the church at Antioch instead of being done by a Missionary Society as an organization separate from the

church? Does the history of Missionary Societies in exercising control over the churches justify the church at Antioch in doing the work in this way?

3. Does Paul's criticism of the sorcerer justify preachers today in making personal attacks on people from the pulpit? Can it be proved that Paul made this statement before a public assembly?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Is there any indication that all churches were as active in missionary work as the one at Antioch?

How many men were as active in such work as Paul?

What other church is mentioned as sounding forth the gospel?

How does missionary activity today compare with other periods of church history?

What could this class do to promote interest in missionary activity?

Golden Text Explained

Give the setting in which our Golden Text is found.

How does this command compare with that given to Abraham?

How much did Paul and Abraham invest in their separate ventures? What do you think of the wisdom of making such investment?

What hinders people today from making such investment of their lives?

What was especially hard about being an apostle to the Gentiles?

What did Paul's response to the call cost him?

Contrast Paul's response to the call with that of the rich young ruler.

Name three characteristics necessary in Paul to respond to the call as he did.

What keeps us from responding to such calls today?

Missionaries Appointed

Discuss the meaning of the terms prophets and teachers, and distinguish between them.

What do you know of Symeon Niger?

What do you know of Lucius of Cyrene?

What do you know of Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod?

What is the meaning of the word ministered in verse 2?

What do you know of the practice of fasting in the early churches?

What is meant by separating people to a certain work?

Were these men appointed to the apostleship or to be preachers? Why?

What was the value of laying hands on them and should we practice such today?

Missionaries at Work

By whom were these missionaries sent forth?

What do you know of Seleucia?

What do you know of Cyprus?

What do you know of Salamis?

What do you know of Paphos?

Who was Bar-Jesus and what is the meaning of his name?

What do you know of proconsuls and of Sergius Paulus in particular?

What did Bar-Jesus seek to do for Sergius Paulus?

What is the meaning of the words Saul and Paul?

What is meant by guile and villainy and son of the devil and enemy of righteousness?

How was Bar-Jesus punished? How long did his punishment last?

Of what does this punishment remind you in the life of Paul?

What effect did this have on the proconsul?

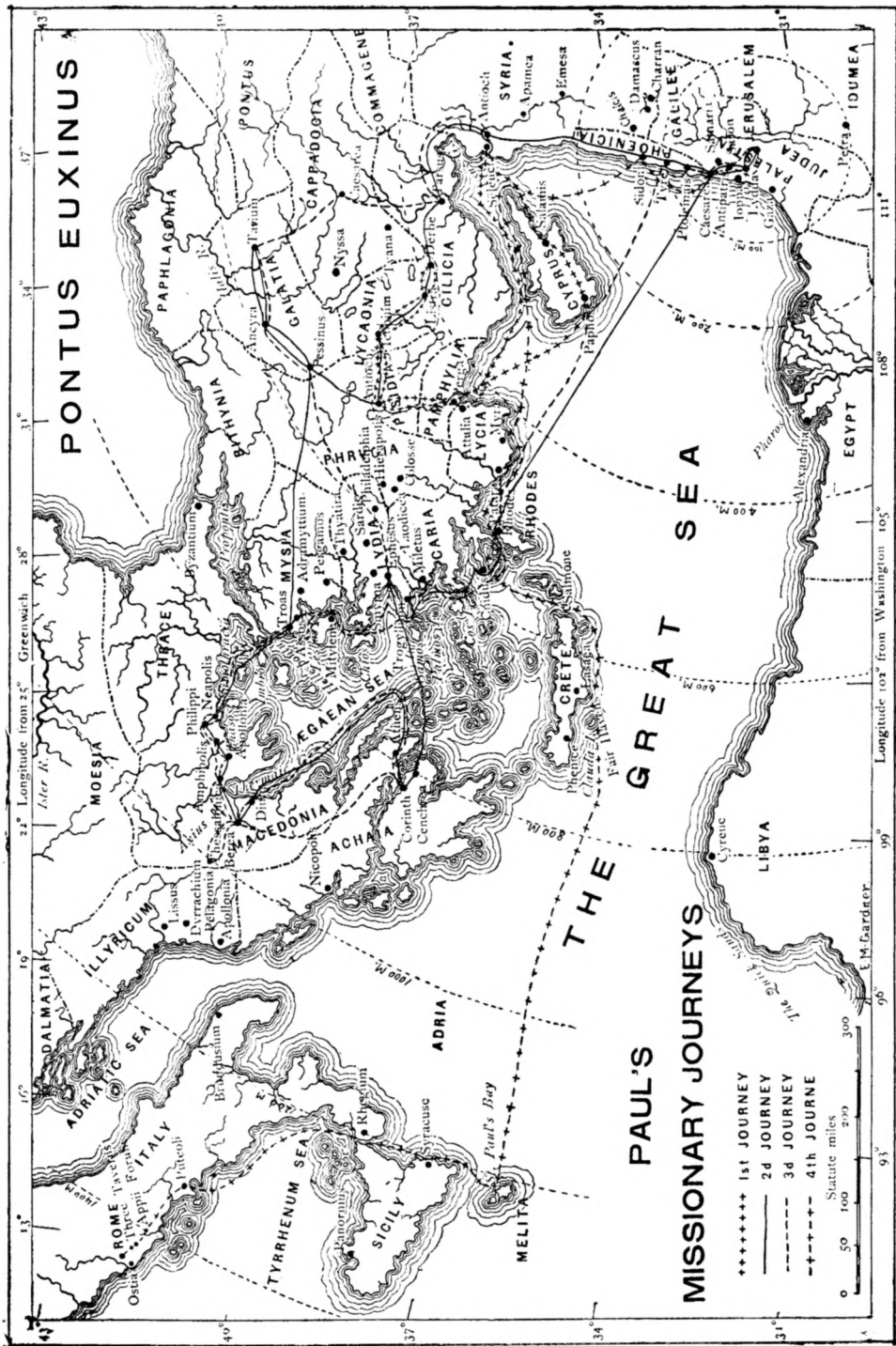
Does that fact that he believed mean that he became a Christian?

What does the expression "Paul and his company" signify?

At what place did John Mark turn back?

How do we know Paul was displeased with Mark's action?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?



SECOND QUARTER

LESSONS IN ACTS

Last Half

Aim.—To lead the pupil to an understanding of primitive Christianity, and to beget in him the desire and purpose to live the Christian life and to win others to faith in the Lord Jesus.

Lesson I—April 2, 1950

PAUL STONED AT LYSTRA

The Lesson Text

Acts 14: 19-28

19 But there came Jews thither from An-ti-och and I-co'-ni-um: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Bar'-na-bas to Der'-be.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lys'-tra, and to I-co'-ni-um, and to An-ti-och,

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had appointed

for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

24 And they passed through Pisld'-i-a, and came to Pam-phyl'-i-a.

25 And when they had spoken the word in Per'-ga, they went down to At-ta-li'-a;

26 And thence they sailed to An-ti-och, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gen'-tiles.

28 And they tarried no little time with the disciples.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 14: 8-18.

Daily Bible Readings

March 27. M..... Prayer in Time of Suffering (Acts 4: 23-31)
March 28. T..... Rejoice for Privilege of Suffering (Acts 5: 33-42)
March 29. W..... Suffering Rewarded in Glory (Rom. 8: 12-25)
March 30. T..... Gospel Progresses in Persecution (Phil. 1: 12-26)
March 31. F..... Preaching in Spite of Persecution (1 Thess. 2: 1-12)
April 1. S..... Christ Our Example in Suffering (1 Pet 2: 18-25)
April 2. S..... Be Patient in Suffering (James 5: 7-11)

TIME.—A.D. 48.

PLACES.—Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, Antioch, Pisidia, Perga, and Attalia.

PERSONS.—Paul, Barnabas, and hostile Jews.

Introduction

Our last lesson dealt with the beginning of Paul's missionary work with the church at Antioch. We left

him and Barnabas in Perga, where John Mark turned back. From there they went to Antioch of Pisidia,

where they were invited to speak in the synagogue. And here we have our first recorded sermon of Paul. It shows a wide knowledge of Jewish history; it reveals an understanding of God's plan and purpose in his choice and use of the Jewish people; and it gives us an insight to the great faith of Paul in Jesus of Nazareth as the only One through whom we may have justification. Paul preached Jesus as the one through whom people may have remission of sins, and told them they could find justification in him, but not in the law of Moses. (Acts 13: 38, 39.) Those who think Paul gradually formed his opinions about our freedom from the ceremonies of the law have a difficulty in explaining this clear statement of the impotence of the law to justify in his first recorded sermon.

Golden Text Explained

1. Godly Living. Living a godly life is living like Jesus lived. When he was asked to show the disciples the Father, he told them that all who had seen him had seen the Father. (John 14: 9.) He was not the Father, but he was the Father's representative on earth; and he had done the will of the Father perfectly, so that all who had seen his life had seen how the Father would live if he were here. The life of Christ consisted of two things, doing and teaching. (Acts 1: 1.) So those who live godly will do what Jesus would do if he were here, and they will teach what he would teach if he were here. Jesus was merciful to all who were discouraged and downcast; he lent them a helping hand and encouraged them to live better and more useful lives. Those who were proud and haughty, he rebuked. Those who served, he commended, regardless of whether they were Jew or Gentile. The helpful Samaritan was commended above the selfish priest and Levite. False teachers were exposed and their doctrines condemned. Money lovers were rebuked and driven from the temple, which he said was to be a house of prayer instead of a den of thieves. Hypocrites were unmasked and said to be like whited sepulchres, "which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of

From Antioch in Pisidia, they went to Iconium, ninety miles from Antioch. From there they went another thirty miles to Lystra, in the province of Lycaonia. This place is remembered for two things, the fact that Paul was stoned here, and that Timothy lived here. No mention is made of a synagogue here, and it is very probable that there was a very small Jewish population. Did Timothy witness the stoning of Paul? Timothy's familiarity with the scriptures (2 Tim. 1: 5; 3: 15) made it easy for him to appreciate the preaching of Paul; and the miracles Paul performed impressed the boy still more, and he undoubtedly became a Christian while Paul was there the first time. Then when Paul went through Lystra on his second missionary journey, Timothy was ready to join his party. (Acts 16: 1-3.)

dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." (Matt 23: 27.) He was not satisfied to teach people the truth, but he showed them what was false in the doctrines popular in his day, and warned the people against them. This he said was why the world hated him. (John 7: 7.)

2. In Christ Jesus. The godly life is lived in Christ Jesus. There is no such thing as a godly life out of Christ. One may live a clean moral life out of Christ. One may live an upright and honorable life according to man's standards out of Christ. But one cannot be godly and stay out of Christ. One may live a devoutly religious life out of Christ. But being devoutly religious is not necessarily being a godly person. A godly life is living like Jesus would live, and living that life in Christ. There is but one way to live that life in Christ, and that is to get into Christ. Paul teaches us that we are baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) If one has never been baptized into Christ, he can never live godly in Christ. Regardless of how much a woman loves a man; regardless of how much she may serve him; and regardless of how well satisfied she may be with her relationship to the man, she is not his wife until the ceremony has been said. So one may believe that Jesus is the Christ and

the Son of God; one may do good and make great sacrifices; and one may be perfectly satisfied with his present relationship, but until that one has been baptized into Christ he is not in Christ and cannot live a godly life in Christ. Of course this baptism must be preceded by faith (Heb. 11: 6), repentance (Acts 3: 19), confession (Horn. 10: 9, 10; Acts 8: 37), if it is valid.

3. Suffer Persecution. Some think Paul's statement refers to conditions in that day, and that it does not apply now since we have government protection from persecution. But it is as true today as it was then. The form of persecution today is not what it was then on account of the protection we have from our govern-

ment, but the persecution is as effective and in many cases as violent and prolonged. We have accepted the false philosophy that we should not follow a course which provokes people to anger and opposition. If Jesus and the apostles had adopted that philosophy they could still be alive, so far as the enemies of truth are concerned. We are to live godly, do and teach as Jesus, regardless of how many are provoked to anger. To deviate from that course to avoid persecution is to deny and forsake our Lord; it is to prefer the friendship of the world to that of the Lord. On the other hand we are not to do things just for the sake of provoking people to anger and opposition. Our sole aim is to live godly, willing to pay the cost whatever it may be.

Exposition of the Text

I. From Worship to Stoning (Acts 14: 19, 20)

Jews from Antioch and Iconium. It is necessary to read verses 8 through 18 of this chapter to get the setting of this lesson. Paul and Barnabas had gone from Antioch and Iconium, because of persecution, and had been well received at first. Paul had healed a man who had been a cripple from birth, and this led the people of Lystra to think their gods had come down in human form. They called Barnabas Jupiter. This Jupiter was among the greatest gods of the heathen world. "He was the Ammon of Africa, the Belus of Babylon, the Osiris of Egypt. His common appellation was the father of gods and men." Paul was called Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. Mercury was supposed to be the son of Jupiter, and his messenger. He was the god of eloquence, and some say he was looked upon as the god of "thieves, pickpockets, and all dishonest persons." The people wished to offer worship to Paul and Barnabas, but they refused to allow it, saying they were men of like passions with others, but messengers of the God who made heaven and earth, who provides us with all good things, and who alone is worthy of worship. With this introduction to the people, and with this hold on their interest, attention, and affection, it seems that they should have con-

verted the whole population of the city and surrounding territory. But people are easily moved, and when Jews from Antioch and Iconium came down spreading hatred they soon persuaded the multitude to turn against the men whom they would have worshipped. This reminds us of the time when the Jewish leaders stirred up the multitudes in Jerusalem to call for the release of a thief and murderer and to cry for the crucifixion of Jesus who had fed them, healed many of them, and had never harmed any of them.

They stoned Paul. Since this was a Jewish method of putting men to death, we may well conclude that the Jews from Antioch and Iconium not only inspired this deed, but they directed it. The Jews of Jerusalem would not stone Stephen in the holy city, but these Jews had no such respect for Lystra, so they stoned Paul and then dragged him out of the city. They did not respect Paul enough to give him a burial. Thinking he was dead, they threw his body out of the city. Luke makes it plain that Paul was not dead by saying that the Jews supposed he was dead.

He rose up and entered the city. While the disciples were standing around him, Paul rose up. We can but wonder if Timothy was among those who saw him stoned, and who followed his body to the city dump, to determine if he was actually dead,

and, if so, to give him decent burial. Paul intimates that Timothy knew of his suffering at Lystra, but does not necessarily imply that Timothy witnessed it. (2 Tim. 3: 11.) Whether there was a miracle worked to enable him to rise up and go back into the city under his own power is a matter of dispute which we can never settle. Some suggest that one stone struck Paul on the head, rendering him unconscious for a short time, and the Jews supposing him to be dead did not continue to throw stones. And as soon as consciousness returned, he was able to go where he pleased. This is possible, though it is hardly what we would expect from these enraged Jews who were leading the persecution.

On the morrow he went forth to Derbe. This town was twenty miles east of Lystra. The stoning of Paul was either not very severe, or a miracle of healing was performed, to make him capable of walking twenty miles on the following day.

II. The Return Journey (Acts 14: 21-23)

Preached and made many disciples. If there was any opposition to their work in this city of Derbe, no mention is made of it. It is possible that Paul's quick, and perhaps miraculous, recovery from the stoning at Lystra caused his enemies to cease persecution for a time. One of the many disciples made in Derbe was one Gaius, who assisted Paul in his missionary work. (Acts 20: 4.)

They returned to Lystra. Paul and Barnabas had been gone from Antioch of Syria for quite some time, and it is natural they should be longing to get back to friends and a rest from the arduous labors in which they had so long been engaged. They could have gone still eastward from Derbe, through the well known "Cilician Gates" into Paul's home province of Cilicia, and then across a short arm of the Mediterranean Sea from Tarsus to Antioch. But with a shepherd's care for their flocks, they took the long way home to visit the churches they had established.

Confirming the souls. Some denominations have a rite of confirmation, a ceremony by which people are admitted to the full privileges of

church membership. But Paul knew nothing of such a ceremony, and this verse must not be used to justify such. It simply means that Paul and Barnabas gave further instruction and encouragement, establishing these new converts in the faith.

Exhorting them to continue in the faith. We would expect Barnabas, being the Son of exhortation (Acts 4: 36), to do a great part of this work. To continue in the faith was not merely to continue to believe the gospel, but to be faithful to the Lord. This was to keep them from departing from the faith, making shipwreck of the faith, or falling away from the faith. The word faith here means the gospel system of faith as opposed to the law system of works.

Through many tribulations enter the kingdom. The word kingdom here refers to the heavenly kingdom instead of the church, for these people were already citizens in the kingdom which is the church. Paul does not mean to say that suffering persecution is an essential condition to entrance into the kingdom, for we can conceive of people obeying the gospel and dying before they have time to suffer many tribulations. But since the world is what it is, and since the Lord demands his people to follow his example, it is a fact that all who live godly lives shall suffer persecution; we need not expect to go to heaven without suffering.

Appointed elders in every church. First, we should notice that appointment was made. Men do not simply grow into the eldership and take over the duties and authority of that office without the consent of and selection by the church. Next, -notice the word elders. The word means older, or aged men, but that does not exhaust the meaning of the word. For surely Paul did not appoint these to be old men. In Titus 1: 5-9 we learn the qualifications of elders, and surely a person does not have to have these qualifications to be an old man. The word elder is used to designate an office, or service, in the church. Next, it should be noticed that they appointed elders, more than one, in every church. The Lord never intended that one man should rule any one congregation, much less thou-

sands of them as is the case with the Pope of Rome.

Commended them to the Lord. Here again we find praying and fasting connected. The mind is in much better condition for praying after a fast than it is after a feast. Basket dinners, with tables loaded as only our sisters can load them, do not contribute to the spirituality of the afternoon worship. But one who would suggest a fast instead of a feast would likely be termed a fanatic. Not being able to remain with them indefinitely, Paul commended them to the Lord as one able and willing to protect and direct them always. They were as sheep among wolves, a little inexperienced group of Christians among heathen idol worshippers; surely they would need to depend on the Lord if they hope to succeed.

III. Report to Home Church (Acts 14: 24-28)

Passed through Pisidia to Pamphylia. These are small divisions of territory in Asia Minor through which Paul and Barnabas passed. Pisidia lies to the north of Pamphylia. They did not preach here, at least no mention is made of it if they did, when they were on their way to Antioch of Pisidia. Nor did they go by Attalia on their forward journey, but now they go sixteen miles out of their way to preach the gospel there. What success, if any, attended their labors in these cities is not stated.

Thence they sailed to Antioch. Notice it is said that they had been committed to the grace of God upon their leaving for the work. The providence of God, though not specifically mentioned, is implied very often in the scriptures. The apostles commended the new churches to the Lord, the workers were committed to the grace of God, and Paul commended the elders at Ephesus to God and to the word of his grace. (Acts 20: 32.) We need to be more mind-

ful of God, and of the part he plays in our lives. We need to be more mindful of him in laying our plans for the future. (James 4: 13-15.)

Gathered the church together. It is significant that they did not report to the president of the Missionary Society. The church is God's missionary society, and any organization which usurps its place and work is a plant which is to be rooted up. (Matt. 15: 13.) We are told to give glory to God in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. (Eph. 3: 21.) To try to give glory to God in some human organization is an insult to God, and to Christ who loved the church and gave himself up for it; it is to reject that organization furnished us by the wisdom of God and the death of Christ for a human organization, which has neither the wisdom of God nor the blood of Christ in it.

Rehearsed all things God had done with them. Notice that Luke says God had done these things. Paul and Barnabas were only tools which God used in doing such great things. When we read reports of the activities of preachers in our brotherhood periodicals, we find some which fail to give God the most prominent place. Since the day of miracles is ended, does God no longer do his work through men? God is not limited to miracles. He can work through us as well today as when he used miracles.

Opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. This is not to be taken as the first opportunity Gentiles had to obey the gospel, for the Antioch church was composed largely of Gentiles. But in new regions God had given Gentiles access to gospel privileges the same as the Jews. Door denotes a means of access or entrance, and faith is that door. Gentiles had been given access by faith into the blessings God has for all people.

Topics for Discussion

1. Were all the people in Antioch Christians or did they take the gospel to foreign lands before they converted all in the home community? Some brethren argue that it is not our duty to preach the gospel in Africa

until all of America is converted. If we follow the example of the apostles, we will take the gospel to regions beyond without waiting to convert everybody in the homeland.

2. Some others criticize our mis-

sion efforts by saying we think we cannot do mission work without getting seasick, that is, we cannot do missionary work without crossing the sea. Well, when Paul and Barnabas started out to do missionary work, they headed for the sea at Seleucia and sailed for Cyprus.

3. In times of excitement we are

liable to be swayed by popular sentiment. The people who wished to worship Paul and Barnabas, quickly turned to stone them. They did no thinking for themselves. When there is trouble in the church, use your own head, take your time to think for yourself, and do not rush into any conclusion or action without deliberation.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Where was Paul's first recorded sermon preached?

What do the contents of this sermon suggest about the preacher?

For what two things is the city of Lystra remembered?

What evidence do we have that Timothy became a Christian at this time?

Golden Text Explained

What is meant by living a godly life?

What were the two main things in Christ's life?

Name and discuss some of the outstanding characteristics of Christ's life.

Illustrate the constructive and destructive teaching of Christ.

Where only can a godly life be lived?

Distinguish between a moral life and a godly life.

Is there a difference between a religious life and a godly life?

How does one get into Christ where the godly life can be lived?

How is this illustrated by the marriage ceremony?

By what must baptism be preceded to be valid?

Do godly people suffer persecution now?

Through what false philosophy do some avoid persecution?

In what way do some deny and forsake their Lord?

From Worship to Stoning

What caused the apostles to be well received at first in Lystra?

What do you know of Jupiter?

What do you know of Mercury?

What caused the people to turn against Paul and Barnabas?

Where was Paul stoned and what was done with his body?

How soon was Paul back at work?

Do you think he was miraculously restored in body?

Where was their next field of labor and how far from Lystra?

The Return Journey

Was there any open opposition to them in Derbe?

Who was one of their converts in Derbe?

What would have been the shortest route home for Paul and Barnabas and did they take it?

What is meant by confirming souls?

What is meant by continuing in the faith?

What is suggested by the word appoint?

What is the meaning of the word elder?

What is suggested about the number of elders in each church?

Discuss the difference between praying and fasting, and praying and feasting.

What is meant by commending them to the Lord?

Report to Home Church

Through what provinces did they pass on their homeward journey?

How is the providence of God suggested in this lesson?

To whom did these missionaries make their report?

In what are we to give glory to God and for how long?

Why is it wrong to do such work through human organizations?

How is God given the prominence in this report?

What is meant by the door of faith?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson II—April 9, 1950

THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE

The Lesson Text

Acts 15: 1-5, 28-32.

1 And certain men came down from Ju-dae'a and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Mo'-ses, ye cannot be saved.

2 And when Paul and Bar-ḡd-bas had no small dissension and ques-

tioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Bar-na-bas, and certain other of them, should go up to Je-ru'-sa-lēm unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed

through both Phoe-ni'-ci-a and Sama-ri-a, declaring the conversion of the Oen'-tiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Je-ru'-sa-lem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Phar'-i-sees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Mo'-ses.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no

greater burden than these necessary things:

29 That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

30 So they, when they were dismissed, came down to An'-ti-och; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle.

31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Ju'-das and Si'-las, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Ye are not under law, but under grace"* (Rom. 6: 14b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 15: 19-27.

Daily Bible Readings

April 3. M..... The Beginning of Circumcision (Gen. 17: 9-14)
 April 4. T..... Circumcision Made Part of Law (Lev. 12: 1-5)
 April 5. W..... The Law came Through Moses (John 1: 10-18)
 April 6. T..... Dead to the Law Through Christ (Rom. 7: 1-6)
 April 7. F..... Ministration of Condemnation Passed Away (2 Cor. 3: 1-18)
 April 8. S..... Peter's Speech at the Conference (Acts 15: 7-11)
 April 9. S..... Paul Reports Conference; Rebukes Peter (Gal. 2: 1-16)

TIME.—A.D. 50.

PLACES.—Antioch and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Paul, Barnabas, Judas, Silas, and a number of Jerusalem brethren.

Introduction

This Jerusalem conference has been used by some as authority for church councils and conventions for the purpose of determining what shall be the faith and practice of the church. But obviously this conference does not authorize such, for, first, the gathering was not primarily for the purpose of determining what the church was to do and believe. It was to determine what was the will of God as revealed to apostles. They were all committed to the course of doing the will of God; the dispute was over what is the will of God on the question of circumcision as respects the Gentiles. We might say that this conference gives us an example of going to the apostles, and other inspired men, to determine what is the will of God on any question. But since we do not have living apostles, we go to the writings of inspired men, the Bible, to find the will of the Lord. Again, this was the first and last such

conference; it was not repeated; it was not a quarterly or annual affair. It was made necessary because orthodox Jews refused to accept Paul as an apostle; they did not believe God was revealing his will through Paul. And they believed Peter, and other inspired men in Jerusalem, held the same views on circumcision which they held. Paul knew he had received his information on the subject from heaven (Gal. 1: 11, 12), and he was confident the other apostles had received the same revelation on the subject he had received. So he was willing, for the sake of peace in the church, to go to Jerusalem and compare his teaching on this subject with that of the other apostles. He said he "went up by revelation" (Gal. 2: 2), so we conclude that the Lord told him to go. It is interesting to note that apostles speaking by revelation often said things which they did not fully understand. Peter did so on

Pentecost (Acts 2: 39), when he included the Gentiles in the promises of God. In this conference Peter took his stand with Paul, but his practice was not so consistent. For when he later went to Antioch he wavered in

his application of his teaching, and was rebuked by Paul for his mistake. (Gal. 2: 11-16.) Inspiration guaranteed right teaching, but it did not guarantee right living, or right application of the teaching.

Golden Text Explained

1. Ye Are Not Under Law. Some take this to mean the law of Moses. It is true that we are not under the law of Moses, for that was taken out of the way (Col. 2: 14); it was the ministration of death which passed away (2 Cor. 3); and the first covenant with which was found fault, and which was taken away that the second might be established. (Heb. 8: 7-13; 10: 9, 10.) But the word law here may as well include all law. In our text Paul was discussing the subject of justification through Jesus Christ. He had said our justification is not by works of law, and had used Abraham's justification to prove that people may be justified by faith without obeying the works of the law of Moses. (Rom. 4.) The principle established, and indeed parts of his argument, go beyond the works required by the law of Moses, and show that man cannot be justified by works of law, any law. It is just as true that we cannot be justified on the ground of perfect obedience to the law of Christ as it was true that Jews could not be justified on the ground of perfect obedience to the law of Moses. In order to be justified by law, by obedience to law, one must render absolutely perfect obedience. That requires perfect knowledge of the law, and perfect application of that perfect knowledge. No one has perfect knowledge of his duty to God; and no one can perfectly apply what knowledge he has. Hence there is no hope of being justified through law which says, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal. 3: 10.) But in our text Paul assures us that we are not under law as a system of justification, for which we may well thank God and take courage.

2. But Under Grace. "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his

faith is reckoned for righteousness." (Rom. 4: 4, 5.) If one could render perfect obedience, or do meritorious works, God would be obligated to save that one; his salvation would not be by grace of God. But since no one can do such works as will merit salvation, nor can he render perfect obedience to gospel commandments, if he is ever saved it will be by the grace of God. God's willingness to forgive us our imperfections, on account of the death of Christ in our behalf, is our only hope of salvation. When Paul said we are under grace he had the gospel system in mind as opposed to the system of works under the law.

We may note, first, that this places salvation within the reach of all. If salvation depends on our works, none would be saved. If only the rich and the wise could be saved, only a few would get there. But since salvation is "by grace through faith" (Eph. 2: 8), all can be saved. As often as man stumbles and repents, God forgives. If we are to forgive seventy times seven (Matt. 18: 22), is there any limit to the times God will forgive?

Next, this system of justification gives honor and glory to God, and not to man. If man could be justified by works he hath whereof to glory. (Rom. 4: 2.) But since he cannot be saved by his own works, all who reach heaven can say they are sinners saved by grace.

Next, this doctrine of salvation by grace through faith is the attraction of the gospel which encourages humanity to overcome sin. Since none can live without sin, man realizes he has no chance to be saved by works, so abandons hope and gives up to his inclinations to sin. But since he can have faith, and can be saved by faith, he is encouraged to try; and through this exercise he is strengthened; and by the providence of God he is protected from sins too great to bear (1 Cor. 10: 13), so continues his struggle against sin in his life.

Exposition of the Text

I. Trouble ill the Church (Acts 15: 1-5)

Certain men came down from Judaea. These men were members of the church, or they would not have agreed to listen to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. A great portion of the Jewish Christians still held to the ceremonies of the law of Moses. (Acts 21: 20.)

Except ye be circumcised. These brethren were not satisfied to hold to the ceremonies of the law for themselves, but they wished to bind these ceremonies on the Gentiles. And they wished to make them conditions of salvation. "It involved the feeling that circumcision was an act of merit, and that those who submitted to it acquired a virtual right to the divine favor. In a word, it substituted the law of works for the gratuitous justification which the gospel declares to be the only way in which sinners can be saved." (Hackett.) It served, also, to tie Christianity on to Judaism, and to give the Jews the feeling that they had not lost their place of superiority over the Gentiles.

Had no small dissension and questioning. The word translated *dissension* here is used elsewhere to mean insurrection and riot. (Mark 15: 7; Acts 19: 40.) And the word for *questioning* always involves the idea of a dispute. (Vincent.) And this was no small affair. There was quite a stir in the church over this doctrinal difference. It is deplorable that such conditions arise, but it is not wrong for good brethren to defend the truth, contend for the faith, on such occasions. Who would criticize Paul and Barnabas for taking part in this dispute? The very life of the church in Antioch was at stake, and it would have been a cowardly retreat on Paul's part to have allowed these men from Judaea to teach their false doctrines without opposition and exposure. People today who criticize faithful brethren for their defense of the truth harm the church about as much as the false teachers.

Appointed Paul and Barnabas and certain other men. If the brethren generally at Antioch took sides in this argument, nothing is said about it. It is likely that the false teachers had some support among the Jewish ele-

ment in the church. But the church as a whole was willing to submit the proposition to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; they were willing to learn the truth, and to abide by it. This was a fair and just attitude; it was commendable. Among the "certain other men" we may be sure of Titus. (Gal. 2: 1.)

The apostles and elders. The apostles enjoyed a distinction that others did not in that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit who was to guide them into all truth. (John 16: 13.) Why the elders of the Jerusalem church were included is not clear, unless it be that such men as James, the Lord's brother, was among them. Having associated with Jesus during his personal ministry, and having been with the church since its beginning, they had gained a reputation almost equal with that of the apostles.

Brought on their way by the church. The expression *brought on their way* usually signifies to accompany one for a distance. (Acts 20: 38; 21: 5.) Hackett says, "Attended part of the way by some of the church, as a mark of honor." They passed through Phoenicia, which was a very small country north of Palestine. Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities. They then passed through Samaria, which was north of Judaea, lying between Judaea and Galilee. Some preaching had already been done among the Samaritans, such as Philip (Acts 8), and so there were churches to entertain Paul and his company as they passed that way. And they took time to tell these brethren of the conversion of the Gentiles. The Samaritans would naturally rejoice over this more than the orthodox Jews, for they long had been the victims of the pride and arrogance of the Jews. (John 4: 9.) So it is said there was great rejoicing among them on account of the conversion of the Gentiles.

They were received of the church. "The word implies a cordial welcome." (Vincent.) Paul could not be sure of such a welcome, since he had some trouble once before. (Acts 9: 26.) His report of this matter in Gal.

2 tells us that he had some private sessions with the apostles and elders

before the matter was placed before the open meeting. This courtesy may be included in this expression of cordial reception here.

There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees. Those who gave the trouble at Antioch had come for this meeting, and no doubt, they gathered all their sympathizers for this meeting to make as great show of strength as possible. And from Paul we learn that some were privily brought in for this occasion. (Gal. 2: 4.) "The attachment to forms, which rendered them Pharisees out of the church, rendered them legalists in it."

It is needful to circumcise them. This was the bone of contention. The Jews were willing for Gentiles to have gospel privileges if they would become Jews first by submitting to circumcision. To settle this matter once for all, Paul took Titus along as a test case. Titus was a Greek (Gal. 2: 3), and the apostles and elders did not demand that he be circumcised; so Paul could say to all Gentiles that the brethren at Jerusalem did not teach the necessity of circumcision and produce Titus as evidence of the truth of his statement.

II. Conclusion of Conference (Acts 15: 28-32)

Seemed good to the Holy Spirit. This is a claim to inspiration on the point. That which is about to be announced is from the Holy Spirit. The words "and to us" are added to show that the apostles and elders were willing to accept, and agree with, the conclusion of the Holy Spirit in this dispute.

No greater burden than these necessary things. The ceremonies of the law were regarded as burdensome. Peter spoke of them as a yoke that the people were not able to bear. (Acts 15: 10.) It should be noted that the things which are about to be announced are "necessary things." One writer says, "The things in question are said to be *necessary*, not (excepting the last of them) because they were wrong in themselves, but because the Gentile Christians were bound by the law of charity to avoid a course which, while it involved no question of conscience on their part, would offend and grieve their Jewish brethren, and lead inevitably to strife and alienation." (Hackett.)

Abstain from things sacrificed to idols. The reader should study Paul's treatment of this subject in 1 Cor. 8: 1-13. Paul realized that meat was not polluted by having been offered to an idol, but said that not all men know that. So for the sake of the conscience of the weak brother, he would refrain from eating such meat. As long as there was other meat, it was a little thing to argue his right to use meat sacrificed to idols; and to contend for his liberty in such matters might destroy the weak brother for whom Christ died.

Abstain from blood. Commentators generally say that the first three of these necessary are ceremonial, but this is not a matter of mere ceremony. People are commanded to abstain from blood because the life is in the blood. This was a law before Moses gave his ceremonial law. (Gen. 9: 4-6.) It was necessary to give this teaching to Gentiles, for the drinking of blood was common among them at the time of making sacrifices and covenants. Not having had such teaching on the subject as the Jews had, it was necessary to include it.

Abstain from things strangled. This is really a part of the prohibition against eating blood. There would be nothing wrong with eating the meat of a strangled fowl or animal if it were not for the fact that the blood is still in the meat. Jews were required to get the blood out of the meat and cover it with dust. (Lev. 17: 13.) People who break the necks of chickens, but do not bleed them, allowing them to strangle in their blood, violate this teaching. For this reason many fowls at the market should not be eaten.

Abstain from fornication. It must be remembered that Gentiles had not been taught on this question as the Jews, so it was a much more common practice among them. It was even a part of much of the heathen worship. Many temples were little more than houses of prostitution, priestesses being kept there for that purpose. As long as the rights of a husband were not invaded, fornication was practiced without shame or disgrace. For this reason it was necessary to give Gentiles special instruction on the subject.

It shall be well with you. The let-

ter concludes with the promise that it shall be well with those who abstain from these things. It is not intended to intimate that these are all the conditions of salvation, or all the things necessary for Gentile Christians to maintain the proper relationship with God; but if they abstain from these four things, they will be safe as regards those matters in dispute between those Jewish teachers and the Gentiles.

They came down to Antioch. As soon as the conference ended, they went back to Antioch to take the news to the church. They lost no time in calling the brethren together to hear the good news. These were matters of great importance, and brethren had enough interest in them to come together to hear the report. It is a sad condition when brethren do not have enough interest in the affairs of the church to come together to discuss things of interest to the church. There are people in the church today who would have taken the attitude that the matter was just something for preachers to argue about, and they would determine not to get mixed up in the affair, they would not take sides either way. Many brethren do not know enough about the Bible to take sides in a dispute, and they think they are to be complimented on account of it. Being too ignorant to take a stand for the right

is never any thing to brag about. The church needs intelligent support, and one who does not know the doctrines of the gospel can't be worth much to the church in times of trouble. What would have become of the church, and of Gentile liberty, if Paul and Barnabas had not had the knowledge and the courage to stand for the truth? When the decision of the conference was read, the brethren rejoiced for the consolation. We ought always rejoice when truth gains a victory. Love rejoiceth with the truth. (1 Cor. 13: 6.)

Judas and Silas exhorted the brethren. Nothing is known about Judas. Some suppose him to be the brother of Joseph Barsabbas of Acts 1: 23. Some think he is the same as Jude, the writer of the epistle by that name. Silas, called Sylvanus (1 Thess. 1: 1), became a companion of Paul in missionary work. (Acts 15: 40.) These men exhorted and confirmed the Gentile brethren at Antioch. It was a source of comfort for strong Jewish brethren to come from Jerusalem with a message of love and fellowship. And Paul must have felt relieved when he was vindicated before his home church. But the battle was not over, as he had to continue to fight elsewhere over this same ground. The enemies of truth never quit.

Topics for Discussion

1. Disputes in the church should, and will, continue as long as there are false teachers, and as long as there are faithful men who are willing to contend for the faith. And it is the duty of the membership generally to hold up the hands of those who are contending for the truth. We need an educated, indoctrinated membership who know the truth; and we need a courageous loyal membership who are willing to stand for the truth.

2. What the apostles have to say on a question should be final with all men. We do not need conferences

to determine the faith and practice of the church. Gatherings of great minds to study the "apostles' doctrine" may be helpful, but great minds can never determine the faith of the church without due respect for the teaching of apostles.

3. We are not to think the decisions of the apostles on the matter of eating blood and things strangled pertained to that age only, and that we are free to do as we please now. The life is still in the blood, and it is still displeasing to God to eat blood, or meat from which the blood has not been drained properly.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Is the Jerusalem conference an example for conferences today to determine the faith of the church?

What was the primary purpose of the Jerusalem conference?
 Did the apostles hold conferences regularly?
 Why was Paul willing to go to Jerusalem about the matter of circumcision?
 Give instances of apostles speaking when they did not understand the full import of what they said.
 Did inspiration assist one in living right?

Golden Text Explained

Give proof that the law of Moses has been taken away.
 How did Paul prove that we can be justified without the work of the law of Moses?
 Can one be justified on the ground of perfect obedience to gospel commandments?
 What two things are necessary to perfect obedience?
 State Paul's doctrine of work and debt, and faith and grace.
 What is our only hope of salvation?
 Why does this system of salvation make salvation possible to all?
 How does this system honor and glorify God?
 Show how this doctrine encourages man to overcome sin.

Trouble in the Church

Was the trouble at Antioch caused by church members?
 What false doctrine did these brethren teach?
 What is the meaning of the word dissension? Of questioning?
 Is it better to let false teachers have their way than engage in a dispute? Why?
 Who went from Antioch to Jerusalem for the conference?

To whom did they look for settlement of the dispute?
 Through what countries did they pass?
 Did they find churches there?
 Why would these Samaritans rejoice that Gentiles were being converted?
 How were Paul and his company received in Jerusalem?
 Who opposed Paul in this conference in Jerusalem?
 What strategy did Paul use to make the truth apparent?

Conclusion of Conference

Was this matter settled by inspiration?
 How were the ceremonies of the law of Moses considered?
 Give Paul's teaching on abstaining from meats sacrificed to idols.
 Why should we abstain from eating blood?
 How old is the law against eating of blood?
 Why is it wrong to eat things strangled?
 How do some people violate this law today?
 Why should Gentiles especially be told to abstain from fornication?
 What promise was made to those who would obey these teachings?
 How did the church at Antioch manifest its interest in this important matter?
 Show the need of a courageous and intelligent membership in the church today with reference to such matters as disputes over doctrinal issues.
 Who were appointed by the Jerusalem church to go back to Antioch with Paul?
 What do you know of these men?
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson III—April 16, 1950

PAUL HEEDS THE MACEDONIAN CALL

The Lesson Text

Acts 16: 9-15, 28-34

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Mag-e-do'-ni-a standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Mag-e-do'-ni-a, and help us.

10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Mac-e-do'-ni-a, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Tro'-as, we made a straight course to Sam'-o-thrace, and the day following to Ne-ap'-o-lis;

12 And from thence to Phi-üü'-o-ü, which is a city of Mag-e-do'-ni-a, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side,

where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together.

14 And a certain woman named Lyd'-i-a, a seller of purple, of the city of Thy-a-ti'-ra, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Si'-las,

30 And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Je'-sus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.

32 And they spake the word of the

Lord unto him, with all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately.

34 And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *"Come over into Macedonia, and help us."* (Acts 16: 9b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING. — Acts 16: 16-27.

Daily Bible Readings

- April 10. M. Paul a Debtor to All (Rom 1: 8-17)
 April 11. T. Some Do Not Receive the Word (Rom. 10: 16-21)
 April 12. W. Paul Wished to Reach New Fields (Rom. 15: 14-29)
 April 13. T. Paul Laid Foundation in Corinth (1 Cor. 3: 1-15)
 April 14. F. Paul Prays for Open Doors to Preach (Col. 4: 2-6)
 April 15. S. Paul Prays for Courage to Speak (Eph. 6: 10-20)
 April 16. S. Paul Forgets Things Behind (Phil. 3: 1-16)

TIME. — A.D. 52.

PLACES. — Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, and Philippi.

PERSONS. — Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Lydia, and the jailor.

Introduction

The apostles were told to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. The Lord told Paul that he was to be sent "far hence unto the Gentiles" to preach to them the unsearchable riches of the gospel. There were two things rather peculiar about his attitude towards preaching the gospel. First, he wanted to preach where no one else had ever preached. "I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. ... So that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but, as it is written, They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand." (Rom. 15: 17-21.)

Next, Paul wished to preach the gospel without charge to them to whom he preached. "That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel." (1 Cor. 9: 18.) He even worked with

his own hands to support himself and those who were with him. (Acts 20: 34.) "For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." (1 Thess. 2: 9.) This does not mean that Paul refused financial help from all sources, for the church at Philippi sent unto him "once and again." (Phil. 4: 14-16.) And he said, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you." (2 Cor. 11: 8.) How much support, if any at all. Paul received from the Antioch church we do not know. Undoubtedly they took care of him while he was with them for long periods of time, and may have sent to him at other times when he was in the field, but nothing is said of it. When he preached the gospel at Corinth without charge, he said he did not "use to the full my right in the gospel." The full right of the gospel preacher is to "live of the gospel." For, "Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. 9: 14.)

Golden Text Explained

1. Call to Another Continent. When Paul and his company had gone

through Galatia and Phrygia, they thought to go to Asia, or to the south

around Ephesus, but the Holy Spirit closed the door in that direction. His next thought was to turn northward into Bithynia, but again the Spirit laid a restraining hand upon him. He was not a man to turn back, so he went on to Troas, the extreme western point of Asia Minor. It was there he saw in a vision the man in Macedonia calling him to preach the gospel in another continent. And for the first time of which we have any record the gospel goes into Europe, and certainly it was Paul's first time to preach there. Had Paul converted all the people in Asia Minor? Some argue that as long as there are people in our own nation who are not converted, we should not be running off to preach the gospel in another nation. But certainly all the people of Asia Minor had not been converted, for Paul would have gone either to the left or right to preach in new fields if the Holy Spirit had allowed. But there were people in Macedonia who were ready for the gospel, and it was right to take it to them before all in the home nation had heard or obeyed the gospel.

2. Sources of the Call. This call is said to have come from a man. We need not be literal here, but surely this suggests that humanity was calling. And as surely as humanity was calling Paul, humanity is still calling us to take the saving gospel to people who have never heard it and have never known the peace and joy it can give them. First, there are those who worship idols, who have never learned of the true God. Many of them are conscious of the need of something better. They do not know what it is for which they long, but they realize the soul hungers for more than the idol can give. They are calling us to fill that longing desire for they know not what. Next, there are those who have a knowledge of God, but have been misdirected and deluded by false teachers. In many nations the peo-

ple have not been allowed to read the Bible for themselves, but have been forced through fear and intimidation to accept the word of the priest as final in all matters. These slaves of the priesthood are calling for liberation; these misguided souls in denominationalism are calling for us to show them the Christ who is the way to God. Next, there are those who have been in sin so long, and have gone so far away from God, that they know not enough to be dissatisfied with their condition of "pitiful degradation." Slave-holders argued that the slaves were satisfied with their condition. What an indictment! A system which sinks men so far in degradation that they lose all hopes and ambitions for anything better than slavery. So sin can take people so far from God and vitiate their appreciation of the pure and the good that men desire nothing better than a life of sin. These people call—not in words, but their very condition is an eloquent appeal to all who have a spark of pity, or a drop of the milk of human kindness in their hearts.

3. Response to the Call. Paul's response to the call of the man of Macedonia was immediate. Souls are precious; time is fleeting; death is taking people all the time. To delay our response means that some souls will go into eternity unprepared who might otherwise have been ready to meet God in peace. Again, Paul responded with the gospel, the power of God to save the lost. He did not go with a social betterment program; he did not go with medical aid for the sick. These things are by-products of the gospel; they soon follow where the gospel is preached. But Paul's primary, yes his sole, service to the lost was the gospel of Christ to save their souls from sin. The first and imperative need of the lost of any, and every, continent is the gospel. If we take that to them, other things will follow.

Exposition of the Text

I. The Gospel Goes to Europe (Acts 16: 9-12)

A vision appeared to Paul. The word vision seems to imply something a little more real than the word dream. Jesus called the transfigura-

tion a vision. (Matt. 17: 9.) What Peter saw and heard on the housetop at Joppa is called a vision. (Acts 10: 17.) Events and conditions were miraculously pictured to the mind as clearly as if one were actually

looking upon the real scenes. The fact that this vision came to Paul in the night has led many to think it was merely a dream, but the following verse shows that God had a hand in this matter.

There was a man of Macedonia. Paul recognized the man as being a Macedonian just like he would recognize one from that country in actual life. His dress, speech, physical features, all combined to reveal his nationality to Paul. By using an ordinary map the readers will see that Macedonia is situated directly west of the northern part of Asia Minor. Philippi was in the extreme north-eastern portion of Macedonia. The Grecian peninsula was composed of Achaia and Macedonia, the latter being on the north, and was situated between the Aegean Sea on the east and the Adriatic Sea on the west. Much, if not all, of this territory was under Homan rule, and good roads for military purposes had been built.

Straightway we sought to go forth. Here we have the first occurrence of the pronoun *we*, indicating that the writer joined the party of missionaries at Troas. This is said to have been the home of Luke. Luke accompanied Paul into Macedonia as far as Philippi, but seems to have stayed with the little church there, for when mention is made of Paul's departure the pronoun *they* is used again. (Acts 16: 40.) It is worthwhile to notice that Luke says they left *straightway*, or immediately, after the vision for Macedonia. No time was lost when once they knew what was the will of the Lord. No doubt many souls have been lost because people have been slow getting to the mission fields. A realization of the value of souls should spur us on to immediate action.

God had called us to preach the gospel. They construed the vision as a call from God to preach the gospel in Macedonia. God does not always call in the same manner. Philip was directed by an angel. (Acts 8.) Paul was called to Antioch by Barnabas finding him and asking him to join him in gospel labors with that church. (Acts 11: 25, 26.) No doubt one was as much in the providence of God as the other. It is difficult to know where

God calls to service, but we may be sure that those who look for the easy place or the big salary are not called of God.

Setting sail from Troas. The first stop after leaving Troas was the island of Samothrace. This was about half way between Troas and Neapolis. It was a small island, being about twenty miles in circumference, and "an asylum for fugitives and criminals." On this first leg of the journey Paul passed within sight of the now famous Dardanelles, leaving that narrow passage on his right. Completing the second leg of the sea voyage brought Paul and his company to Neapolis, or new city. This was the seaport for Philippi.

Philippi, the first of the district. This city was named for Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, its founder. What is meant by *first of the district* is not clear. Some think it means the first city where they preached. Others think it means the chief city, though Thessalonica was the capital of the district. It is further stated that Philippi was a Homan colony. It was made such by Augustus Caesar in 42 B.C. Colonies were established by moving Roman citizens into a territory, or city, and giving them all the rights and privileges they would enjoy if they were in Rome; it amounted to extension of city limits.

II. Paul's First Convert (Acts 16: 13-15)

On the sabbath day ... to a place of prayer. There was no synagogue in Philippi, hence not a large Jewish population. It is said that where ten Jewish families could be found they erected a synagogue and carried on their worship. Some suggest they met near the river on account of the need of water for their divers washings. It is further stated that Paul preached to the women who gathered. Either they were in the majority, or there were no men at all; no mention is made of men, other than Paul and his company.

Woman named Lydia from Thyatira. This woman was a merchant, who had gone quite a long distance from home to sell her wares. She was a seller of purple. This may have been a dye or the cloth, probably the lat-

ter. The rich clothed themselves in purple. (Luke 16: 19.) The color was either a deep violet, a deep scarlet or crimson, or the deep blue of the Mediterranean. (Vincent.) The dye was obtained from a small shellfish, about one drop being obtained from each fish, hence it was very costly. The dye was so permanent that it has been known to retain its freshness of color for hundreds of years. The city of Thyatira was in Asia, not far north of Ephesus. One of the seven churches of Asia was there. (Rev. 2: 18.)

One that worshipped God. It is interesting to turn through the book of Acts and notice how many of those converted to Christianity were religious people. Some think that as long as they are religious they are acceptable to God. But the fact that most converts during the labors of the apostles were religious people, we must conclude that it is not enough merely to be religious. One may worship God in ignorance (Acts 17: 23), and one may offer vain worship to God. (Matt. 15: 9.)

Whose heart the Lord opened. It is not necessary to conclude that the Lord worked a miracle on Lydia's heart or understanding. The Lord opened her heart by means of the word he gave Paul to preach, which moved her to give heed, or to attend, to the things which he spoke. We often speak of a stingy man's purse being opened by the appeal of the orphan. So this woman's heart was opened by the teaching of Paul, and she was moved to obey it.

She was baptized, and her household. Her baptism was one of the things she did when she gave heed to the things spoken by Paul. It is one of the commandments of the gospel, and one has not obeyed the gospel until that one has been baptized. The fact that her household was baptized, and the further fact that no mention is made of their believing, has led some to think they were her infant children, and were baptized on account of her faith. (Barnes.) But it is the duty of those who make this contention to prove (1) that she was married, (2) that she had children, (3) that they were with her that far from home, and (4) that they were subjects of gospel baptism.

Obviously no one can prove either, hence no ground for such a conclusion.

III. Conversion of the Jailer (Acts 16: 28-34)

Do thyself no harm, we are all here. The student should read verses 16-27 to get the connection between these two paragraphs. Paul and Silas have been arrested on false charges, and have been imprisoned. Instead of cursing the officers for mistreatment, they sang and prayed to God during the night. At midnight an earthquake opened the prison and released the prisoners. The jailer thinking the prisoners were gone, and knowing he would be punished with death for allowing their escape, was about to kill himself when stopped by these words of Paul.

Trembling for fear fell down before Paul. Why the jailer connected the events of this hour with Paul may be supposed on account of Paul's words to him, or the knowledge of the fact that Paul and Silas had been imprisoned because of their religious activities. But the events of the hour and his reflection upon his lost condition were enough to make him fear and tremble.

What must I do to be saved? This suggests that he had given some thought to his lost condition. He was not asking what he must do to square things with the Roman authorities if some prisoner had escaped. He was not asking what he must do to make amends to Paul and Silas for their mistreatment. The answer Paul gave is proof that he was asking what to do to be saved from sin. In this question it is suggested that one must do something to be saved. People often ask God to come down in saving power as if the next move in our salvation is God's move.

Believe on the Lord Jesus. By many this verse is taken for proof that we are saved by faith only, because faith is the only thing mentioned. If that is true, it follows that we need not repent to be saved, for repentance is not mentioned. Neither is confession mentioned, yet Paul says confession with the mouth is one thing we must do to be saved. (Rom. 10: 9.) And here again we have the household idea, but no posi-

tive proof that there were infants among the number baptized. In fact there are two things said which exclude infants from the number baptized. First, Paul spoke the word of the Lord to all in his house. (Verse 32.) There is no advantage in preaching to infants, so we conclude that "all that were in his house" were such as could understand the word of the Lord when spoken to them. Second, it is said "all his house" rejoiced with the jailor over their baptism. (Verse 34.) Infants could not rejoice over being baptized, or sprinkled, so we conclude that "all his house" were old enough to appreciate what was done, and to rejoice over it.

Baptized the same hour of the night. Those who practice sprinkling think there was not enough water

in the prison for immersion. Verse 30 says he brought them out, so they were not in the prison when he was baptized. Luke says the jailor washed their stripes. He used a word which means to wash the whole body, to bathe. (Vincent.) Where there is sufficient water to bathe the whole body, there is enough to baptize. The fact it was done the same hour of the night suggests the importance of baptism. If it is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38), it should certainly be attended to without delay. If it puts one into Christ (Rom. 6: 3), there should be no delay.

Set food before them. This added to the fact that he washed their stripes shows that the jailor repented of the wrongs he had done Paul and Silas.

Topics for Discussion

1. Luke left his business in Troas, went with Paul to Philippi to help establish a church, and stayed there for some time no doubt to give the small group the leadership it needed. Are there men today who love the church enough, and who have enough desire to save the lost, to go with a preacher into a mission field, live there and build the church?

2. Paul commended the church at Philippi for having fellowship with him in preaching the gospel from the first day. (Phil. 1: 5.) When Lydia was baptized, she invited the preachers to abide in her house, and

she constrained them. Extending that hospitality was a part of that gospel fellowship for which Paul was thankful. Such hospitality is not seen so often now as it was in days past.

3. What part did the earthquake have in the salvation of the jailor? Would he have listened to the gospel if there had been no earthquake? Distinguish between *incidental* and *essential* means of conversion. It is well for us to take advantage of incidental means now, such as sickness, death of loved one, etc., to get people to hear the gospel.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

In what places did Paul wish to preach the gospel? Why?

Name another thing peculiar about Paul's preaching.

Whom did Paul support with the labor of his hands?

Did he receive any financial help? From whom?

What is the preacher's full right in the gospel?

Golden Text Explained

Where did Paul plan to preach, and what prevented his doing so?

To what continent was Paul called to preach?

Was he called there before he had converted all in Asia Minor? May we conclude from this that we should carry the

gospel to foreign nations before America is converted?

Who calls us today from heathen lands?

Why is the call so imperative?

Why the need of preaching in lands where the Bible has gone?

What obligation have we to people who are satisfied to live in sin?

Is it possible that none of these are calling to you? And you?

Why was Paul's response to this call immediate?

What did Paul take with him to help that man of Macedonia?

What are some by-products of the gospel which follow? How important is it that we do not confuse the gospel and its by-products?

The Gospel Goes to Europe

What is implied in the word vision?

How did Paul know this man who called from Macedonia?

What do you know of the country of Macedonia?
 Who joined the party at Troas? What do you know of him?
 In what different ways has God called men to preach at different places?
 Name some things God does not use to call men to new fields of labor.
 What do you know of Samothrace? Neapolis?
 What do you know of the city of Philippi?

Paul's First Convert

What is suggested by these women worshipping by the river?
 What do you know of purple as the word is used here?
 What do you know of Lydia's home town?
 What kind of people were the majority of converts to the Lord?
 What kinds of worship can you name and describe?
 What is meant by the Lord opening this woman's heart?

Why was she baptized?
 Of what did her household consist?

Conversion of the Jailor

Relate the circumstances which brought Paul and the jailor together.
 What was the jailor's attitude towards Paul? Why?
 What is the meaning of the question the jailor asked Paul?
 What was Paul's answer? Was it a complete answer to the question?
 Why did Paul speak the word of the Lord to the jailor and his house?
 What proof do we have that no infants were baptized here?
 Where did the baptism take place, in the jail or out of it?
 What proof do we have of sufficient water to immerse?
 What suggests the importance of baptism?
 What evidence do we have of a change of heart in the jailor?
 What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IV—April 23, 1950

PAUL SPEAKS IN ATHENS

The Lesson Text

Acts 17: 22-34

22 And Paul stood in the midst of the Ar-ē-op'-a-gus, and said, Ye men of Ath'-ens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious.

23 For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.

24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even

of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man.

30 The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent:

31 Inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again.

33 Thus Paul went out from among them.

34 But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Di-o-nys'-i-us the Ar-e-op'-a-gite, and a woman named Dam'-a-ris, and others with them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness(1 Cor. 1: 23.)*

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 17: 16-21.

Daily Bible Readings

April 17.	M. That in Which Man Should Glory (Jer. 9: 23-26)
April 18.	
April 19.	W. Consider the Wondrous Works of God (Job 37: 14-24)
April 20.	T. Jesus Condemns Human Traditions (Mark 7: 1-13)
April 21. F.....	Man's Wisdom Leads to Destruction (Rom. 1: 18-25)
April 22. S.....	Worldly Wisdom Made Foolish (1 Cor. 1: 18-31)
April 23. S.....	Warning Against Worldly Philosophy (Col. 2: 8-15)

T. Why Jehovah

TIME.—A.D. 52.

PLACE.—Athens.

PERSONS.—Paul and the philosophers of Athens.

Introduction

The city of Athens was the capital of Attica. It is said to have been "founded by Cecrops, and an Egyptian colony, about 1556 years before the Christian era." The name is derived from the patron goddess Athena. Barnes states that it was called Athens in honor of Minerva, but this is an Italian goddess whose worship was subsequently identified with Athena. "In order to understand the localities mentioned in the sacred narrative, it may be observed that four hills of moderate height rise within the walls of the city. Of these one to the northeast is the celebrated Acropolis, or citadel, being a square craggy rock about 150 feet high. Immediately to the west of the Acropolis is a second hill of irregular form, but inferior height, called the Areopagus. To the southwest rises a third hill, the Pnyx, on which the assemblies of the citizens were held; and to the south of the latter is a fourth hill, known as the Museum. The Agora or 'market', where St. Paul disputed daily, was situated in the valley between the Acropolis, the Areopagus, the Pnyx, and the Museum. . . . The remark of the sacred historian respecting the inquisitive character of the Athenians is attested

by the unanimous voice of antiquity. The great Athenian orator rebukes his countrymen for their love of constantly going about in the market, and asking one another, What news? . . . The remark of Paul upon the 'superstitious' character of the Athenians is in like manner confirmed by the ancient writers." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

A good education in the arts and sciences of the day is a good thing, but it should be remembered that it is not a worthy end in itself; it is but a means to an end. That amount of knowledge which can be used to the good of our fellow man and the glory of God is worthwhile; beyond that, knowledge of worldly affairs is detrimental. The trend of higher learning at present is away from God. Very few university professors believe the Bible to be a revelation from God, and many of them do not even believe in God. If Paul were to preach the sermon in our average university which he preached in Athens, he would get about the same reception today which he got in Athens. Christian parents should be slow to send their children into such universities where they are continually exposed to the poison of infidelity.

Golden Text Explained

1. We Preach Christ Crucified.

Paul had just said that the world by its wisdom had not come to know God, and had not discovered a way to come to God to be saved. Further he said that the Jews seek after signs. They had been accustomed to appearances of God in great display as at Mt. Sinai when changes were made in his dealings with them. They

reasoned that if there was any great change to be made in God's dealings with them, God would make some great display of his majesty and glory as was made at Sinai. And the Greeks were looking to wise systems of philosophy for salvation. They had not been accustomed to revelations from God, and they refused to recognize God's "everlasting power and

divinity" which could be perceived in the things which God has made (Rom. 1: 20), so they became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. But Paul looked neither for signs nor to systems of philosophy; he preached Christ crucified. The emphasis here is on the word crucified. For the moment he loses sight of the sinless life of Christ, which could have been of no value to the saving of the world if he had not died; he loses sight of the wonderful service Jesus rendered while living among men, which would have been worthless to save if he had not died for our sins. To preach Christ crucified is to tell of his death for our sins, and of the power in the blood of Christ to save from sin.

2. Unto Jews a Stumbling-block. The Jews had exalted ideas only of their Messiah. They expected him to come in glory and honor; they expected him to deliver them from the bondage to Rome, destroy their enemies, and use their leaders to rule the world. But when Jesus came in humility and poverty, subject to the laws of Rome, and allowed himself to be crucified by the very power the Jews thought the Messiah would destroy, they could not see in him their conquering and reigning Messiah. If he was unable to save himself, how could he save others? If he was to be a great and glorious king worthy of love, respect, and worship, why would he submit to such an ignominious death? We have had the Christian view of the cross so long that we fail to see the shame and ignominy which attached to it in the Jewish mind, so we fail to see why it should be such a stumbling-

block to them. We attach guilt and shame to the hangman's gallows and the electric chair. If a man is hanged by an enraged mob of citizens, we have just cause to think the man guilty of some great crime. Jesus was hanged by the vote of the people encouraged by their religious leaders. How could a man of that kind be the Messiah described in the scriptures? How could he be God's Prince and David's son? But the preaching of Christ crucified for the sins of the world was necessary to the salvation of the world, so it was Paul's message.

3. Unto Gentiles Foolishness. The Gentile world knew nothing of the Messiah expected by the Jews, so had no convictions as to what the Christ would be. Hence they were not disappointed, did not stumble over not getting what they expected. But when Paul preached Christ crucified as the Saviour from sin, it appeared foolish to them. They had been trained to expect salvation to come through something great and wise, through some system of philosophy evolved by some super-mind. They had been trained to look upon all that came out of Judaea with contempt and scorn, and they would have looked upon a system of philosophy that way if it came from Judaea. So when the idea that salvation comes from a poor peasant of Judaea who was crucified was preached to them, they mocked and ridiculed the message and the messenger. It still seems foolish to the learned of our day. Few of them believe the death of Jesus was any more than that of a martyr for his cause. We still need to preach the death of Jesus for our sins, and his resurrection for our justification.

Exposition of the Text

I. Paul's Speech in Athens (Acts 17: 22-31)

Ye are very religious. Verses 22

23 serve as an introduction. Paul realized he was among idolaters, and, though his "spirit was provoked within him" (verse 16), he was conciliatory in this introduction. The word religious here means that they were devoted to the fear and reverence of their gods. It is not to be taken as in any sense an endorsement

of their forms of worship; it neither endorsed nor condemned.

To an unknown God. Historical statements are plentiful to the effect that there were many altars with this inscription on them. (Hackett.) And one in particular is mentioned as being erected in about 600 B.C., when none of the known gods could deliver them from a severe pestilence. (Barnes.) Some have suggested that since they believed in the existence of

many gods, and feared they might overlook one whom they did not know, that they erected this altar just to be sure they did not slight a god.

What ye worship in ignorance. Paul called their devotions to this idol worship. Yet he characterized it as ignorant worship. This was not very flattering to the philosophers, but it served well as a starting point for Paul. These men spent their time in doing nothing but hearing and telling something new. Hence it was wise in Paul to begin by telling them he knew of that God whom they called unknown. That God is worshipped by many today in ignorance almost equal to that of the men of Athens is shameful but true. What are the characteristics essential to God? How have his glory and power and wisdom been manifested in his dealings with humanity? These are questions all must be able to answer if they expect to render intelligent worship. But some are too lazy mentally to study, so continue to worship in ignorance.

The God that made the world. Here Paul begins to describe God to them. In telling them God made the world, Paul contradicted two ideas to which they held. First, that the various gods were responsible for various parts of the creation and control of the elements. Second, this contradicts the idea that matter is eternal. On the positive side it presents God as all powerful, and not a lifeless idol to be carried about by them at will.

Lord of heaven and earth. Since God is Lord, or ruler, of heaven and earth and fills the immensity of the universe with his power and glory, they should not think to confine him to temples made with hands. Solomon realized this truth when he said, "But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!" (1 Kings 8: 27.)

Neither is he served by men's hands. May we not serve God with our hands? There are many services we may render him with our hands, but here the thought is that God is not dependent on his creatures. The heathen brought food to their gods,

and they offered gold and precious stones on the altars, and built costly shrines to appease their gods.

He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. Instead of God being dependent on us, we are absolutely dependent on him for all things, even to our breath. What a contrast! Their gods could be carried about from place to place; had to be fed by them; and extended favors only when the heathen gave them what was pleasing to them. But the God Paul knew filled the universe, needed nothing from men, but freely gave all necessities of life.

He made one of every nation. King James version says, He made of one blood. Whether the word *blood* is in the original or not, the statement means that God made all existing people from one common stock. From this the men of Athens got two lessons. First, since all have sprung from one stock, there should be no racial prejudice, no feeling of superiority, as Greeks felt towards the Jews. Second, if all men came from one stock, and God was the maker, all men should worship that God. This left no room for national gods. The difference in language, features, and habits must be accounted for on some basis other than polytheism.

Determined seasons, and bounds of habitation. The word *determined* means to fix, or mark out as a boundary. Seasons here refer to time of national growth, prosperity, and decline. Bounds of habitation simply means the limits of their territory, the place of their abode. And again this refers to nations, not to individuals. "In assigning to the nations their respective abodes, he fixed both the seasons of their prosperity and the limits of their territory, i.e., it was he who decided when and how long they should flourish, and how far their dominion should extend." (Hackett.) Job said. "He increaseth the nations, and he destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and he leadeth them captive." (Job 12: 23.) God separated the races geographically, not because one was better than the other, but for social and political reasons: and a lot of social and political trouble could have been avoided

if they had remained in their separate habitations.

That they should seek after God. The thought here is to be tied in with that of verse 26. God made all men, appointed their seasons and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek after God. The purpose of creation was, that we should seek after God, and the provident disposal of the nations was to cause us to seek after God. This rebuked the men of Athens in that they were seeking the pleasures of many gods who had nothing to do with creating and disposing of them in their present state of prosperity and happiness.

If haply they might feel after him. The word *feel* is that which describes the action of the blind in finding their way, or examination of any article. Without the light of divine revelation the Gentile world was at a disadvantage, but still they might feel after him, and find him in his works of creation. The heavens declare his glory. (Psalm 19.) The reader should study Rom. 1: 18-25 in this connection. The thought that he is not far from any of us suggests that he is near enough to be found by all. His existence, power, and divinity may be known from his creation, but his will as to how we should worship can be known only through revelation.

In him we live, move, and have our being. This is said to prove that we should find him, and that he is not far from us. He is the source of our life and activity. Our very being, or existence, is derived from him and depends on him. Since he gives us life, and breath, and all things, we are dependent on him for our existence.

The offspring of God. Here Paul reaches the height of his argument and displays his greatest skill as a preacher. He quotes from one of their poets, which serves two purposes. First, it commended him to them as one who had read something written by others than his own race; it gave them the impression that Paul was a scholar. Second, it gave him the sympathy of all among the Greeks who admired the great poet from whom he quoted; it showed them that their poet in "feeling after God" had learned that we are his offspring. Paul's conclusion from this is power-

ful: we ought not to think God is like gold, silver, or stone; we ought not to think we can carve God out of stone and metal. This was a death blow to idolatry.

Times of ignorance God overlooked. The word *overlook* must not be taken to mean God did not know, or was not displeased with, or will not punish their idolatry. This would be contrary to his teaching in the first two chapters of Romans. It simply means that he passed such action by for the present as if he had not seen, reserving punishment to such time as his wisdom determined.

He commands all men to repent. God's revelation is to all men, not to one nation as it had previously been, and he commands all men to turn to him. Since he makes and preserves all men, he has the right to command all men to turn to him and worship and serve him.

He has appointed a day to judge the world. The command to repent is enforced by the fact that God has appointed a day of judgment. It would be useless to commend men without appointing a day to judge; and it would be unfair to appoint a day to judge men without commanding them to prepare for it. The judgment is to be in righteousness, by the Prince of righteousness, according to standards of righteousness; hence the necessity of our being righteous.

He hath given assurance to all men. How sure are we that there will be a day of judgment? Just as sure as God raised Jesus from the dead. No fact of history is better attested than the fact of his resurrection.

II. Results of the Sermon (Acts 17: 32-34)

Some mocked. The audience was divided. No doubt the majority mocked when they heard Paul speak of the resurrection. The Epicureans, mentioned in verse 18, did not believe in a future life, so would be quick to mock Paul for such a doctrine as the resurrection. But the Stoics did believe in a future life, so it is probable they were those who said they would hear him again on the subject. The Jews were a little better prepared for the doctrine of the resurrection because their prophets had raised people from the

dead. (1 Kings 17.) But these Greeks had no such preparation. Furthermore, the Jews believed in God, and from their knowledge of him it was not incredible that he should raise the dead. (Acts 26: 8.) But the Greeks knew nothing of God and his power, so with them it was incredible that the dead should be raised. And when Paul mentioned the resurrection of Jesus, it was more than they could accept. It was so far beyond anything they had conceived of their gods doing that they were not prepared to believe the God Paul preached could do it.

Certain men clave unto him. It is said that some believed. Whether we are to conclude that these became

Christians or not is not clear. It may be simply intended that they believed what Paul had preached. No mention is made of a church at Athens, and it is generally agreed that Paul's efforts resulted in failure. The Areopagite means a judge in the court of the Areopagus. Eusebius and other historians say this man was the first bishop in Athens and that he ended his life as a martyr. Damaris is thought by some to have been the wife of the Areopagite, but Greek construction does not admit of that meaning. It is supposed she was a woman of prominence, otherwise her name would not have been mentioned. If but one soul was saved by Paul on this visit to Athens, his time and effort were well spent.

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul had a few days to spend in a great city, the center of learning and art. He did not spend his time sight-seeing, but in preaching the gospel to the lost. Many more churches would be established and many more souls saved if all would follow his example.

2. Pick out the statements in Paul's sermon which teach the *unity* of God, the *spiritual* nature of God, the *independence* of God, the *omnipresence* of God, the *sovereignty* of God, the *beneficence* of God, the *providence* of

God, the *justice* of God, the *forbearance* of God, and the *fatherhood* of God.

3. With Paul's description of God in mind, "How pitiful a thing is (a) heathenism, the ignorance of God; and (b) atheism, the denial of God; and (c) indifference, the rejection of God! How excellent and how wise a thing is (a) reverence for God; (b) obedience to God; (c) an earnest effort to obtain the Divine favor, and to live in his love!" (Pulpit Commentary.)

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?
Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Of what country was Athens the capital city?

When was the city founded? For whom named?

Name four hills prominent in the city. Where was the market where Paul disputed daily?

What was characteristic of the men of Athens?

What is the primary use of a good education?

What is the trend of higher learning today? What reception would Paul's preaching get in the average university?

Golden Text Explained

For what did Jews seek? For what did Greeks seek?

What grounds did Jews have for seeking a sign?

Why did Greeks look to wise systems of philosophy for salvation?

What did Paul emphasize about Christ which offended Jews and Greeks?

What kind of Messiah did the Jews expect?

What sentiment was attached to the cross as an instrument of death?

What effect did his death on a cross have on the Jewish mind?

How did Paul's message of a crucified Saviour affect the Greek mind?

What was the attitude of Greeks towards that which came from Judaea?

Why do we need to emphasize the death of Christ in our preaching today?

Paul's Speech in Athens

What effect did the idolatry of Athens have on Paul?

What did Paul say to be complimentary to his audience?

What did Paul use to introduce God to his heathen audience?

How did Paul characterize their worship? Can people today worship God in ignorance?

What two lessons did Paul teach by presenting God as the maker of the world?

How did Paul teach them that God cannot be confined to temples?

How did Paul teach that God is independent of our service?

How did Paul teach the common source of humanity?

What is there in this that opposes polytheism?
 What is meant by determining seasons and bounds of habitation?
 Do we have any indication that God intended for the races to live separately?
 For what purpose did God create all men?
 What is suggested by the words *feeling after God*?
 Why does Paul say in Rom. 1: 20 that the heathen are without excuse?
 In what words does Paul prove God responsible for our existence?
 What benefit did Paul derive from quoting a Greek poet?
 What lesson did he teach from the quotation?
 What is meant by God overlooking this ignorance?
 What does God now command of all men? Why?

What emphasizes our need of being righteous?
 What assurance do we have of the judgment?
 Results of the Sermon
 What two schools of philosophers were represented in Athens?
 Which one of these schools would mock? Why?
 Which one would be inclined to give the matter further consideration?
 Why would a resurrection sound more reasonable to a Jew than to a Greek?
 How did this make their gods appear as compared to the God whom Paul preached?
 Did Paul convert anybody to Christ in Athens?
 What do you know of those believers who are mentioned?
 What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson V—April 30, 1950

PAUL PREACHES IN CORINTH

The Lesson Text

Acts 18: 1-11

1 After these things he departed from Ath'-ens, and came to Cor'-inth.

2 And he found a certain Jew named Aq'-ui-la, a man of Pon'-tus by race, lately come from It'-a-ly, with his wife Pris-cil'-la, because Clau'-di-us had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them;

3 And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

5 But when Si'-las and Tim'-othy came down from Mag-e-do'-ni-a, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Je'-sus was the Christ.

6 And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out

his raiment and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gen'-tiles.

7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Ti'-tus Jus'-tus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Cris'-pus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the C6-rln'-thi-ans hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For I *determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*” (1 Cor. 2: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 18: 12-17.

Daily Bible Readings

April 24. M.	Matthew's Record of Crucifixion (Matt. 27:	33-56)
April 25. T.....	Mark's Record of Crucifixion (Mark 15:	22-37)
April 26. W.....	Luke's Record of Crucifixion (Luke 23:	33-49)
April 27. T.....	John's Record of Crucifixion (John 19:	23-37)
April 28. F.	Rulers Ignorant Concerning Jesus (Acts 3:	13-26)
April 29. S.....	Christians Glory in the Cross (Gal. 6:	11-16)
April 30, S.	Reconciliation Through the Cross (Col. 1:	15-23)

TIME.—A.D. 52.

PLACE.—Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, Silas, Timothy, and Corinthians.

Introduction

It is thought that Corinth may have at one time been a Phoenician city, but the earliest trustworthy accounts show it to be in the hands of wealthy Greeks, and a center of military strength. About 200 B.C. it fell into the hands of the Romans, but on account of maltreatment of the Roman ambassadors the city was completely destroyed. It was rebuilt by Julius Caesar, and at once took its place as a leading city in its part of the world. Its location gives it prominence and advantage. It was situated at the western end of a very narrow isthmus which connects southern and northern Greece. It is just forty-five miles west of Athens. "Corinth was a place of great mental activity, as well as of commercial and manufacturing enterprise. Its wealth was so celebrated as to be proverbial; so were the vice and profligacy of its inhabitants. The worship of Venus here was attended with shameful licentiousness." The temple of Apollo was also located in Corinth. And the sanctuary of Neptune was there. To the northwest of the city

was located a great theatre, where Paul may have witnessed some of the games which gave him striking illustrations for his writings. (1 Cor. 9: 24ff.) "Lasciviousness was not only practiced and allowed, but was consecrated by the worship of Venus; and no small part of the wealth and splendour of the city arose from the offerings made by licentious passion in the very temples of this goddess. No city of ancient times was more profligate. It was the *Paris* of antiquity; the seat of splendour, and show, and corruption. Yet even here, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of splendour, gaiety, and dissoluteness, Paul entered on the work of rearing a church, and here he was eminently successful." (Barnes.) The fact that a strong church could be built in this city devoted to the corrupt worship of Venus is an indication of the strength of Christianity, and an encouragement to us to plant the church in those cities today where worldliness and vice of every kind are rampant.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Paul Preached Christ.** Paul was a great scholar. His education compared favorably with the best of his time. He could have used "excellency of speech or of wisdom" in proclaiming the testimony of God, but he deliberately chose not to do so. Some have thought that Paul attempted to make a show of his worldly wisdom in his speech at Athens, and seeing how it failed, he chose the opposite manner of speech at Corinth. But a study of his speech at Athens will prove that he made no such attempt. He had more to say about God at Athens than he usually said because of their worship of many gods, but he preached the resurrection of Christ, and no doubt would have said more about his crucifixion if the people had been willing to listen to him. But what did Paul preach about Christ?

First, he preached about the person of Christ. He said that he was

God. (Rom 9: 5.) He said he was God manifested in the flesh. (1 Tim. 3: 16.) He declared that Jesus had an existence in the form of God, that he was on equality with God, but that he emptied himself of all this to die on the cross for the salvation of the world. (Phil. 2: 6-8.) He said Christ was the image of the invisible God, the firstborn, or Lord, of all creation, for all things were created by him and for him; and that he preserves all things. (Col. 1: 15-17.) And he also said that it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should all the fulness of the Godhead dwell. (Col. 1: 19; 2: 9.) He presented Christ as the legal heir of David through the flesh, and as the Son of God, a divine person, through the spirit. (Rom. 1: 3, 4.)

Next, Paul preached Christ in his three-fold office. He is God's prophet. Though God in the long ago spoke to his people through prophets, he

now, says Paul, speaks to us through his Son. (Heb. 1: 1, 2.) And to Paul, if he wrote the book of Hebrews, we are indebted for much of the teaching of the Bible about the priesthood of Christ. He is a great high priest after the order of Melchizedek, who, on account of his earthlife, can sympathize with us, and one who, because he lives forever, can continue in his priesthood. And he is a priest who does not have to offer for his own sins, for he, though tempted in all points like as we, was sinless. And, third, Paul presented Christ as a King. He is the head of every man (1 Cor. 11: 3); the head of the church, or King over the kingdom, (Eph. 1: 22); and seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, with the sceptre of uprightness in his hand, reigning until his enemies have been made the footstool of his feet. (Heb. 1: 5-13.)

2. Paul Preached Christ Crucified.

It is human to stress the good, the honorable, and the exalting things about people whom we wish to honor. If Christianity were the product of human wisdom, the crucifixion of Jesus would scarcely be mentioned.

His miracles and his service to humanity and the great principles of his teachings would have first place in the preaching of those who wish to honor him, if man had been left alone to choose the theme of his preaching. But being led by the Holy Spirit in choosing both the subject and the words used in preaching, Paul preached Jesus and him crucified. (1 Cor. 2: 6-16.) But what is meant by preaching Christ crucified? First, it means to set forth Jesus as the propitiation for our sins. (Rom. 3: 25.) Next, it means to set forth Jesus as the foundation of all our hopes for better things both in this life and in the world to come. (Heb. 6: 19, 20.) It means to tell of the greatest demonstration of love this world has ever known. (Rom. 5: 5-11.) There is nothing that will touch and tender the heart of man like the love of God for man which moved him to send his only begotten Son to die on the cross for our sins. Christ crucified is the power that moves people to quit sin and live right. It moves people to deny themselves of pleasure and profit that they may make others happy and glorify God.

Exposition of the Text

I. Humble Beginning: (Acts 18: 1-4)

After these things he departed. This statement refers to Paul's stay in Athens. How long he was in Athens is not known, but estimated by some to have been two weeks. And we have no indication that Paul ever returned to Athens. In going from Athens to Corinth Paul traveled forty-five or fifty miles, two days' walk or one day of sailing.

A certain Jew named Aquila. The words Aquila and Priscilla are Roman names. It was common for Jews to take such names when they lived in Roman territory. Aquila is said to have been a man of Pontus by race. Pontus was a district in northern Asia Minor, and from Acts 2: 9 we learn that Jews lived there. When this man became a Christian is not known. He could have learned of Christ in his native land, or he could have been converted in Rome. He was a long-time friend of Paul. (Rom. 16: 3; 1 Cor. 16: 19; 2 Tim. 4: 19.)

Claudius commanded all Jews to depart. Luke says that Aquila and

Priscilla had lately come from Italy because Claudius had commanded all Jews to leave Rome. The reign of this man began in A.D. 41 and ended at his death by poisoning in A.D. 54. It was during his reign that the great famine came which made it necessary for brethren to send help to the church in Judaea. (Acts 11: 28-30.) The command was for *all Jews*, not the Christians only, to leave Rome. No distinction was made between Jews and Christian Jews. The Roman historian Suetonius says that Claudius "expelled the Jews from Rome, who were constantly exciting tumults under their leader, Chrestus." Some think this Chrestus refers to a man of Rome who was active among the Jews of the city. Others think it refers to Christ (Christus), and that Suetonius supposed this leader to be alive, when actually it was their allegiance to Christ that caused all the trouble. Neander seems to favor this view in his Church History. (Vol. I, p. 49.)

Because he was of the same trade.

Paul was educated for a lawyer, a

teacher of the law of Moses. But even though he intended to be a lawyer, he was taught a trade, taught to work with his hands. Ever since their experience during the exile, the Jews realized the importance of being able to work with their hands to earn a living. And it was a proverb among them that a father who neglected to teach his son a trade taught him to be a thief. Though Paul was now an apostle, an ambassador for God (2 Cor. 5: 20), and perhaps the greatest preacher of his day, he was not ashamed to work, nor did he think it out of harmony with his position and profession to work with his hands for his daily bread. Certainly preachers can do more good if they have all their time free to devote to "prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6: 4), but men who think they are too good to soil their hands, or who think manual labor is beneath the dignity of a gospel preacher, ought to quit preaching and work with their hands until they realize the real dignity of labor.

They were tentmakers. Martin Luther thought this meant "weavers of tapestry." Others have taken it to mean weavers of tent cloth. Paul's native country of Cilicia was the source of supply for a tent cloth made of goat's hair called *cilicium*; but the fact that this cloth was made in his native land could hardly be taken as proof that this was his trade. The trade of tentmaker "was a trade lightly esteemed and poorly paid." (Vincent.)

He reasoned in the synagogues. He went to the synagogues because there he found people who believed in God, and who were looking for the Messiah. And it was his plan to preach to the Jews first. He did not go to the synagogue because he believed the things taught there, or because he endorsed the worship offered there; but he went because it afforded him an opportunity to preach the gospel. The word *reasoned* is the translation of a Greek word from which we get our word *dialogue*, and suggests a dispute between two or more. Paul often used this method of teaching, (Acts 17: 2, 17; 20: 7.)

II. Progress of the Work (Acts 18: 5-8)

Silas and Timothy came down. These young helpers had stayed at Beroea when it was thought best for Paul's safety to leave there. (Acts 17: 13, 14.) Paul left Beroea and went to Athens, but sent word back to Silas and Timothy to come to him at once. (Acts 17: 15.) These men took an active part with Paul in the preaching. "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea." (2 Cor. 1: 19.)

Paul was constrained by the word. King James version says Paul was pressed in spirit. The word translated *constrained* is peculiar in this instance. It is translated *holden* in Luke 4: 38; 8: 37; and is translated *sick*, in the sense of *taken sick*, in Acts 28: 8. Hackett says its literal meaning is *held together*, and suggests that the coming of Silas and Timothy relieved Paul of his anxiety and gave him courage to preach without distraction. The construction of the sentence shows that the coming of these brethren was connected with the action of the verb.

Testifying to the Jews. The word testify means to give evidence, to bear witness to. It implies the setting forth of such evidence as cannot be disputed, of making arguments that cannot be denied. In this way Paul argued that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. This work was among the Jews who were expecting a Messiah, and who knew the teaching of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah. His work should have borne fruit, and would have done so if it had not been for the unbelief and hardness of heart of the Jews. (Rom. 11: 7, 20, 25.)

When they opposed and blasphemed. It is said the Jews opposed themselves. According to Vincent this word means an *organized* or *concerted* resistance. They had consulted each other about their response to Paul's preaching, and had decided to reject it. To blaspheme means to speak evil of anything. They spoke evil of Paul and his message, and no doubt had evil things to say of Jesus whom Paul preached. (See Acts 13: 45.)

Shook out his raiment. This is about the same as shaking off the dust of one's feet against people. (Acts 13: 51.) This is what Jesus told his disciples to do when the people of a city refused to receive them. (Matt. 10: 14.) The statement of Paul following explains the meaning of the action in shaking out his raiment. He said, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. He had done all he could. To preach longer to them would be to cast his pearls before swine. (Matt. 7: 6.) It should be noted that Paul did not take personal offense, get angry, and say a lot of hard things to or about the people who rejected his message. He still loved the people, and was willing to make any sacrifice for them if they would only change their attitude towards the Lord and his word.

A certain man named Titus Justus. This man was a Greek, but must have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, since it is said that he worshipped God. Whether he had accepted Christ before he invited Paul to preach in his house we do not know. But certainly he had a line sense of equity and fair-dealing, and feeling that Paul had not been given proper treatment at the synagogue, he invited him to preach in his house. And since it was near the synagogue, Paul could get a hearing from all the Jews who were inclined to listen, and still give attention to the Gentiles to whom he had now turned.

Crispus the ruler of the synagogue. This man was a Jew who had taken a Roman name. The fact that he was the ruler (chief ruler) of the synagogue makes his conversion all the more important at this time. Though Paul was denied the use of the synagogue, the ruler had the courage to stand up for the truth, and to obey it in spite of the danger and disgrace involved. Paul speaks of baptizing him. (1 Cor. 1: 14.) And many of the Corinthians heard the gospel, believed it, and were baptized in obedience to it. Faith comes by hearing, and obedience is impelled by faith. (Rom. 10: 17.)

III. Continuing Ministry (Acts 18: 9-11)

Be not afraid, but speak. Since the Lord does not do things unneces-

sary, we conclude that Paul was becoming fearful. Being inspired did not guarantee that a man would be unafraid in any and all situations. The fact that he was told to speak instead of being afraid suggests that he was being intimidated, threatened if he should continue to speak as he had been doing.

For I am with thee. The presence of the Lord with any man makes a majority. One man and the Lord are enough to do anything the Lord wants done. The fact that the Lord assured Paul that no man would do him harm suggests that he was being threatened with physical injury. And the Lord saw fit to protect Paul from further bodily injury as he worked in this city.

I have much people in this city. Since Paul stayed in Athens not more than a month, but stayed in Corinth eighteen months, may we not conclude that God did not have many people in Athens? What determines whether God has many people in a city? Surely wealth, social prominence, and worldly wisdom do not determine that. Were these people whom the Lord calls his already Christians at the time of this vision? No, they had not yet heard the gospel. The meaning of the passage is this: there were many people in Corinth who were of a disposition of mind to accept the gospel when once it had been presented to them. These who are of such mental attitude to obey the gospel the Lord calls his in anticipation of their obedience. He appeared to Paul in a vision to give him sufficient courage to stay there in spite of the hardships until he had opportunity to reach all those who were disposed to obey the gospel. God knows individuals. He sends preachers to individuals. Such is the worth of an individual in God's sight. We ought to look upon them as being worth all we can do or sacrifice for them in carrying the gospel to them.

He dwelt there a year and six months. Those who oppose preachers staying at one place a long time, preaching for the same church for a long time, get no comfort from this verse. Paul spent his time teaching the word of God among them, not entertaining them. The

primary work of the preacher is to preach and teach the word. When they lose sight of this and give their time to making social calls, they will not be doing the work of an evangelist. It is right that they should go from house to house, a

thing some preachers do not like to do; but they should go from house to house to teach, and not to have a social visit, cultivate the good will of some who demand that the preacher come to see them or they will not attend church.

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul's rule was work or starve. (2 Thess. 3: 10.) He set the example in many places by working with his hands to support himself and those with him. Work is honorable, and none should either be ashamed or afraid to do manual labor. It is not beneath the dignity of a gospel preacher to dig a ditch or to saw logs. Yet it does not recommend a church which allows its preacher to do such work for his support while in its employ.

2. The assurance of God's presence with Paul was enough to cause him to preach boldly for a long time in the most wicked city of his time.

We are assured that he is with us always even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28: 20), so should never allow ourselves to become weary in well-doing, or discouraged in preaching the gospel.

3. As God had many people in Corinth, so he has many people in the world today. As he used Paul to seek for these and teach them the saving truth, so he uses us today. We should be as willing and as diligent in teaching them as Paul was. Time is short, and passing so swiftly that it behooves us to do all we can to reach as many as we can as soon as we can.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the first city of Corinth?

By whom was the city rebuilt?

Where was the city of Corinth situated?

What do you know of its wealth and wickedness?

What temples were located there?

Does the building of a church there suggest what can be done in wicked cities now?

Golden Text Explained

Was Paul's preaching what it was because of his lack of education?

Did Paul fail to preach Christ in Athens?

What did Paul preach about the person of Christ?

What is the fulness of the Godhead? In whom did it dwell?

What did Paul teach about the dual personality of Jesus?

What three offices does Jesus hold? Cite passages from Paul to show what he taught about Christ in these offices.

What proof do we have in this text that the gospel is not of human origin?

Show that preaching Christ crucified means presenting him as the propitiation for sin.

Show that it means setting forth Jesus as our only hope for eternal life.

Show how it means telling of the greatest demonstration of love ever known.

Humble Beginnings

What do you know of Paul's stay in Athens?

With whom did Paul associate himself in

Corinth? What do you know of this man?

Why did Aquila leave Rome?

What ruler caused him to leave Rome?

What do you know of this ruler?

What trade did Aquila and Paul follow?

What was the Jewish custom concerning a trade for a son?

Was such a humble trade inconsistent with Paul's great calling as an apostle?

Where did Paul first preach in Corinth?

What is meant by reasoning?

Progress of the Work

Name some of Paul's associates in the work in Corinth.

Where had these men been while Paul was in Athens?

What is the meaning of the word constrained?

What is meant by testifying?

Why did not Paul's work among the Jews bear much fruit?

What did Paul do when the Jews opposed and blasphemed?

Who was Titus Justus? What do you know of his attitude towards Paul?

Who was the ruler of the synagogue?

Why was his conversion an outstanding achievement?

From what is said in our text, what did the Corinthians have to do to be saved?

Continuing Ministry

What evidence do we have that Paul was becoming fearful in Corinth?

What suggests that Paul was in danger of physical injury?

What promise did God make to Paul? Why?

What did God say he had in that city?

What suggests that God did not have many people in Athens?

In what sense, did God have these people at the time he spoke to Paul?
How does this emphasize the value of the individual?
How long did Paul work in Corinth?

What was his principal business while there? What should be the primary work of evangelists today?
What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VI—May 7, 1950

PAUL PREACHES IN EPHESUS

The Lesson Text

Acts 19: 1-12

1 And it came to pass, that, while A-pol'-los was at Cor'-inth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Eph'-6-sus, and found certain disciples:

2 And he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given.

3 And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism.

4 And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Je'-sus.

5 And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Je'-sus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And they were in all about twelve men.

8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Ty-ran'-nus.

10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in A'-si-a heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 Insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God."* (Acts 20: 27.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Acts 19: 13-20.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 1. M..... Paul's First Visit in Ephesus (Acts 18: 18-21)
May 2. T..... Work of Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18: 24-28)
May 3. W..... Paul's Last Visit in Ephesus (Acts 20: 17-38)
May 4. T..... Paul Encourages Church at Ephesus (Eph. 2: 11-22)
May 5. F..... Practical Lessons for the Church (Eph. 4: 17-32)
May 6. S..... Paul's Final Exhortation to Ephesus (Eph. 6: 10-20)
May 7. S..... John's Letter to Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2: 1-7)

TIME.—A.D. 54 to A.D. 57.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Ephesians.

Introduction

The history of Ephesus reaches back as far as the eleventh century before Christ, though Encyclopaedia Britannica thinks this date a little early. A group of people from Athens,

led by Androclus the son of the king of Athens, were the first known settlers of this section; hence it was Greek in its origin. Being well located for commerce and for military

purposes, Ephesus was the center of many battles and the prize of many victories. The city passed from Ionian rule to Persian. Xerxes honored the city by leaving his children there for safekeeping while he fought with Greece. But the city fell to Greece and was ruled by an oligarchy until 334 B.C. when Alexander the Great established a democratic government. The city passed into the hands of Rome about 135 B.C., and remained a Roman province until the time of Paul's visit there.

Ephesus was the seat of the worship of the goddess Diana or Artemis. A great temple was erected to this goddess. It was 425 feet long, and 220 feet wide. There were 127 marble columns in the temple 60 feet in height, and each was said to con-

tain 150 tons of marble. "In style, too, it constituted an epoch in Greek art, since it was here first that the graceful Ionic order was perfected." The goddess Diana was an artistic, many breasted figure whose body was highly carved with strange figures of animals, flowers and fruits. However one historian says an earlier image was that of a mother walking and holding a child by the hand. Many people of Ephesus derived their living from making small images to sell to the worshippers who came from a distance. Paul's preaching caused these silversmiths to fear their trade might be destroyed. This is one indication of the power of the gospel, and of the success which attended Paul's labors in this city.

Golden Text Explained

1. Safe Course for the Preacher.

Since our text is a reason assigned for a foregoing statement, it will be worthwhile to go back to it for a starting point. Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "I am pure from the blood of all men." Then he said, "For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." To be pure from the blood of men is to be not responsible for their death or destruction. Ezekiel gives us a very forceful illustration of the imagery used here. He said if the watchman sees the enemy coming and does not sound the alarm and the people in the city are destroyed, their blood shall be on his head; but if he sounds the alarm and the people do not heed it, their blood shall be on their own heads. (Ezek. 33.) When Paul said he was free from the blood of all men, he meant that he had done his duty to warn and instruct them, and if they are lost it will not be his fault; their blood will be upon their own heads. And he gives as his reason for being pure from the blood of all men the fact that he had declared the whole counsel of God. From this we conclude that if the preacher declares only a part of the truth, the people to whom he preaches will be lost, and he will bear his part of the responsibility. So the safe course for the Preacher to follow is to preach all the truth; hold back none of it. Since

man does not know what part is saving truth and what part is not—if such division could rightly be made—it behooves us to preach all truth lest we leave out something essential to man's salvation". The word *shrank* indicates that it took courage on Paul's part to preach all the truth. Part of the truth was opposed to Judaism, and so the orthodox Jews resented it, and persecuted him for preaching it. Part of the truth was opposed to heathen worship of idols, so those who worshipped idols, and made their living by making images of these idols, opposed him, and persecuted him for preaching that part. And since part of the gospel seems foolish to the philosopher, there is the temptation to please the wise and powerful. And another part of the gospel demands sacrifices on the part of the rich, and preachers are liable to the temptation to please them for selfish reasons. But the safe course for the preacher is to brave all opposition and preach the whole truth in love without fear or favor.

2. Safe Course for the Hearer.

Preaching all the truth is not only safe for the preacher, but it is also safe for those that hear. If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the pit. (Matt. 15: 14.) The truth has power to make us free from sin. (John 8: 32.) But error alienates us from God. (Eph. 4: 18.)

Paul warned these elders at Ephesus to expect false teachers to come among them like wolves among sheep, and lead off disciples after them by speaking perverse things. (Acts 20: 29, 30.) And he warned Titus that vain talkers and deceivers would overthrow the whole houses by teaching things which they ought not. (Titus 1: 10.) Peter said the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest (pervert) the scriptures to their own destruction, and warned the faithful to be careful lest they fall from their own steadfastness on account of such perversion of the truth. (2 Pet. 3: 16, 17.) Failing to preach all the truth in order to please some who might be offended at distasteful portions is one way of perverting the gospel. Such perversion does untold injury to the

hearer, and brands the preacher as unfaithful and unworthy of the confidence of the people and the blessing of God. If one has not the courage to preach a distasteful truth for fear he will lose the friendship of people, he cannot be the friend of God. (Gal. 1: 10.) Sometimes brethren are vexed because the preacher insists on preaching about certain sins, which happen to be the besetting sins of the brethren. They can fire the preacher, but that does not correct the situation. They can get a preacher who will take orders—suggestions (?)—from them as to what he should preach, but that is worse still. The safe course for the hearers is to get a preacher who will declare the whole counsel of God, and then give heed to what he preaches.

Exposition of the Text

I. Church Established in Ephesus

(Acts 19: 1-7)

Paul came to Ephesus. Since our last lesson Paul has left Corinth to go by Ephesus for a short stop, where he left his companions Aquila and Priscilla. With a promise to return, he went on to Antioch for a visit with his home church. (Acts 18: 21-23.) Then he visited again the churches he established on his second tour in Phrygia and Galatia, called the upper country, and then came to Ephesus, which was near the sea coast and so lower than Phrygia and Galatia.

Found certain disciples there. The word disciples is used in the sense of learners. They knew something of John's work and had received his baptism, so they were learners of the Messiah, and looking for his coming. But they were not Christians, because they had not learned that Jesus of Nazareth is that Messiah for whom they were looking, nor had they obeyed the gospel as revealed by Christ.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit?

Why Paul asked this question is not too clear, though obviously he suspected there was something wrong. By asking this question he would determine whether they were accepted of God, for God gives the Spirit to all who obey him. (Acts 5: 32.) What manifestation, or measure, of the Spirit here is intended is not

clear, but likely it is the miraculous. God supplied the Spirit to all groups of his children that they might teach the truth, and confirm that truth by miracles wrought. If they had such power, they were acceptable to God; but if they did not have such power, Paul would know to teach them the truth and lead them to obey it. And when they told Paul they had not so much as heard whether the Holy Spirit had been given, Paul knew where they stood, and what they needed.

Into what were ye baptized? Notice the change of words here, but not a change of emphasis. First he asked if they received the Spirit when they *believed*. And since they had not received the Spirit, he asked them about their baptism. Paul knew that people do not receive the Holy Spirit at the point of faith, but when they are baptized in the name of Christ. (Acts 2: 38.) So his first question implied an active, obedient faith. Believers who refuse to be baptized never receive the Spirit; baptized believers do receive the Holy Spirit.

Into John's baptism. These people had received the baptism which John taught and administered. Not that they had been baptized by John himself, for he was dead before these people were baptized. They had received this baptism since Pentecost, after which time it was no longer

valid. If they had received it before Pentecost, they would have been prepared for the kingdom and would have been citizens in it the same as the apostles and other disciples on Pentecost. But, like Apollos, they knew nothing of the events of Pentecost; they did not know of the outpouring of the Spirit, nor of the gospel as preached by the apostles on that day; they knew only the teachings of John the Baptist.

John baptized with the baptism of repentance. John said his baptism was "unto repentance." (Matt. 3: 11.) The Jews had apostatized, and John's work was to bring them back into fellowship with God. He baptized them into a state of repentance and reformation. He refused to baptize people who gave no evidence of repentance. (Matt. 3: 7-10.)

They should believe on him that should come after him. John told the people of Christ and told them to believe on him. His baptism pointed to the coming of Christ as a Lamb to be offered for sin. (John 1: 29.) Their acceptance of his baptism was evidence of their faith in the *coming Messiah*, not in a Messiah who had already come. These men at Ephesus had received John's baptism after Jesus died for sins. They, and all who now receive John's baptism, virtually deny that Jesus is the Christ. By accepting that baptism they say they are looking for the Christ to come and suffer for sins, and certainly this denies that he has already come for that purpose.

When they heard this. When Paul taught them the difference between John's baptism and gospel baptism, they were ready to obey the gospel. Religious people generally today refuse to admit a difference between John's baptism and that required by the gospel. But John's baptism was not in the name of Christ, nor was it into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 23: 19.) Those who accepted John's baptism did not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as we do who receive gospel baptism. (John 7: 37-39; Acts 2: 38.) John's baptism looked forward to the coming of Christ to suffer for sins, while gospel baptism looks back to the cross where he died for our sins. John's baptism was

administered after people confessed their sins (Mark 1: 5), while gospel baptism is administered to people who confess their faith in Christ. (Acts 8: 37; Rom. 10: 9, 10.)

Baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. To be baptized into the name of Jesus is to be baptized into fellowship and communion with him for whom the name stands. (Vincent.) And to be baptized into the name of Jesus is also to be baptized into the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit, for they all wear the same name. Notice that the word *name* is singular in Matt. 28: 19. Since salvation is to be found in the name of Jesus (Acts 4: 12), and since these people were baptized *into* that name, it follows that they were not saved until they were baptized. To be baptized *in the name* of Jesus is to be baptized by his authority; but to be baptized *into the name* of Jesus is to come by baptism into fellowship and communion with Jesus. And since Paul wrote these Ephesians that they were saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2: 8), we conclude that this is the way they did it: they believed in Christ, turned from error, and were baptized into Christ. The grace of God was manifested in his willingness to give his Son to die for our sins, and to accept us as justified in him; the faith of these men was manifested in their turning from sin and in being baptized for the remission of sins.

The Holy Spirit came on them. Paul laid his hands on them. By the laying on of apostle's hands this gift was bestowed. (Acts 8: 18.) This is not the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to all who obey him as mentioned in Acts 2: 38 and 5: 32. This is the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit given to guide the church and confirm the word in the absence of the written word which now completely furnishes us unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) Speaking in tongues and prophesying were two of the nine gifts mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 12: 4-11.

II. Church Growth at Ephesus (Acts 19: 8-12)

Spake boldly for three months. As was his custom. Paul went first to the

Jews in their meeting house. But as usual the Jews could not stand such preaching as Paul did. He spoke boldly, as he prayed that he would always do. (Eph. 6: 18, 19.)

Reasoning and persuading. These are two methods used by Paul to get people to obey the gospel. First, he reasoned; he made his arguments, brought up his proof from the scriptures. This would also include exposition of error and removing any ideas from the minds of the people that would hinder a reception of the truth. Then he persuaded people to accept what he had taught them. We are strong on teaching, but weak on persuading people to act. This includes the stirring of the emotions, bringing people to a realization of their lost condition and inciting them to flee from the wrath which is to be revealed against such sins. And all this is related to the kingdom of God, for it was teaching them who was king, who can be citizens in the kingdom, and the standards of *Hie* and worship in the kingdom.

Some were hardened and disobedient. They were not hardened by a sovereign act of God beyond their power to resist; they were hardened by their unbelief. They wilfully rejected the gospel which was God's only power to save them, so were lost without hope of recovery. The disobedience followed as a consequence of the hardening.

Speaking evil of the Way. The word *Way* is used several times by Luke to mean the church. Here they spoke evil of the Way; in verse 23 there was no small stir concerning the Way; Paul confessed that after the Way, which some called a sect, he worshipped God (Acts 24: 14); and Felix had knowledge concerning the Way. (Acts 24: 23.)

In the school of Tyrannus. When the Jews blasphemed Christ and the church, Paul saw no hope of doing them any good; further teaching would only enrage them and make his work harder, and put his life in danger. So he left the synagogue and went into a schoolhouse to do his teaching and preaching. Who Tyrannus was, and whether he was a Christian is not known. Paul used

his house daily for teaching the gospel. Here we have apostolic example for teaching in a school, and teaching daily for long periods of time. Establishing a Bible chair in a State University to teach daily all who will come is exactly parallel with this work of Paul. But if the Bible can be taught effectively in spite of the influence of infidel teachers in such universities, how much more effectively can it be taught in a school where all the teachers are Christians, and the social as well as intellectual influence is favorable to the reception of what is taught! Parents who are able to send their children away to school should realize the danger of sending them into poison pockets of infidelity; they should send them where they will be taught principles which will nourish their faith instead of destroy it.

All Asia heard the word. Paul prolonged his stay at Ephesus for nearly three years. He taught in the synagogue three months; in the school of Tyrannus two years; and then stayed "for a while" after he quit teaching in this school. (Verse 22.) He told the elders he was there for three years. (Acts 20: 31.) As a result of his work all Asia heard the gospel. The word Asia did not include all then that it does now. It referred simply to that province of which Ephesus was the capital city, the western portion of Turkey.

And God wrought special miracles. The word special denotes uncommon, extraordinary. And they were such by reason of the fact that they were wrought without the presence of Paul. Handkerchiefs or clothing carried from Paul to the sick brought health, and drove demons from them who were possessed by the devil. Some think mention is made of this to show that Paul was the equal of Peter whose shadow was sought for healing power. (Acts 5: 15.) Notice the distinction made here between diseases and demon possession. The worldly wise of today tell us that demon possession was not real, that people only thought demons dwelt in their bodies when they were dis-

eased. But here we have Luke, a physician, and an inspired man, mak-

ing a distinction between bodies diseased and possessed by demons.

Topics for Discussion

1. When Paul found a group of religious people who had received John's baptism, he told them to be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ. Baptists today claim they administer the same baptism John administered in the Jordan River. If they do, what would Paul do for them if he were to come back to teach them?

2. A parent sends his child to a university where he knows the majority of teachers are infidels; the

child loses his faith in the Bible as God's word, ceases to believe in Jesus as the divine Son of God, and quits the church. For how much of this will the parent have to answer in the judgment?

3. If Christian colleges afford the opportunity to teach the arts and sciences from the Christian point of view, and surround young people with Christian environment, what obligation do all Christians have to support them?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Who were the first known settlers of Ephesus?

Name some nations of which Ephesus has been a part.

When did the city pass into the control of Rome?

What goddess had a temple there? What do you know of this goddess?

What do you know of the temple erected to this goddess?

How did Paul incur the wrath of the worshippers of this goddess?

Golden Text Explained

From what did Paul say he was pure?

What is meant by the statement?

What did Ezekiel teach on this point?

How did Paul free himself of the blood of all men?

What is there about the gospel to which the orthodox Jew objects?

What do philosophers object to in the gospel?

What do rich men object to? What do immoral people object to?

What is the danger of following a false teacher?

What will perverted preaching do for the hearer?

Can the perverter of truth be the friend of God?

Will firing the preacher of all truth help brethren who are rebuked by it?

Church Established in Ephesus

Trace Paul from the time he left Corinth until he came back to Ephesus.

Whom did Paul find at Ephesus as his first hearers?

Why did Paul ask if they had received the Holy Spirit?

What question did Paul ask about their baptism? Why?

Whose baptism had they received?

Did this mean that they had been baptized by John himself?

Of what great day and the events of that day were they ignorant?

What is meant by the baptism of repentance?

To what great event did the baptism of John look forward?

Can people today receive John's baptism and believe that Jesus died for our sins?

In how many respects did John's baptism differ from gospel baptism?

In what ways was gospel baptism and John's baptism alike?

What is meant by being baptized into the name of Jesus?

Can you prove that one must be baptized into that name in order to be saved?

What is the difference between being baptized in the name and into the name of Jesus?

Can you prove that one must be baptized to be saved by grace through faith?

Why did Paul lay his hands on these men?

Was this the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Church Growth at Ephesus

How long did Paul preach in the synagogue?

What is meant by reasoning? By persuading?

How did the Jews respond to Paul's preaching?

What is meant by the word Way in our text?

In whose school did Paul teach?

What parallel do we have of this manner of teaching?

Is there a better way to teach than using a state school property?

What is the value of Christian environment in teaching God's word?

How wide was Paul's influence through his teaching in Ephesus?

Do you think his connection with this school enabled him to broaden his influences in Asia?

How long did Paul stay in Ephesus?

What were special miracles? Why was Paul enabled to work them?

Can you show there is a difference between disease and demon possession?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VII—May 14, 1950

PAUL'S CHARGE TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

The Lesson Text

Acts 20: 28-38

28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.

29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock;

30 And from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.

32 And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up, and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

33 I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Je'-sus, that he himself said. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God (1 Pet. 5: 2a.)"*

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 20: 17-27.

Daily Bible Readings

May 8. M.....	Qualifications of Elders (1 Tim. 3: 1-7)
May 9. T.....	Qualifications and Duties of Elders (Titus 1: 5-11)
May 10.	W. Elders Worthy of Double Honor (1 Tim. 5: 17-22)
May 11. T.....	Know Elders that Labor Among You (1 Thess. 5: 12-22)
May 12. F.....	Our Duty to Obey Elders (Heb. 13: 17-21)
May 13. S.....	Elders Examples to the Flock (1 Pet. 5: 1-11)
May 14. S.....	Elders in Every Church (Acts 14: 21-28)

TIME.—A.D. 58.

PLACE.—Miletus.

PERSONS.—Paul and the elders at Ephesus.

Introduction

Like the city of Ephesus, Miletus was settled by Ionian Greeks. For a long time it was an independent city of considerable importance. Later it was absorbed in the Persian empire, but revolted and was practically destroyed. After staging a comeback it was taken by Alexander the Great, and through his and the Roman rule never attained more than a second-rate position as a trading center. At the first the city was on the sea-coast with a fine harbor, but in Paul's

day the coast line had receded sufficiently for the brethren to walk quite a distance with him from the town to his ship. (Verse 38.) And according to Hackett the place is now ten miles from the coast. It was situated near where the Meander River empties into the sea, and silt from the river has caused the coast line to recede. Miletus was about thirty miles south of Ephesus, though Albert Barnes says the distance was forty to fifty miles.

In our last lesson Paul was with the church at Ephesus, but we must remember that he covered considerable territory between the time he left there and the time he visited with the elders at Miletus. From Acts 20: 1-6 we learn that Paul went from Ephesus to Macedonia to visit with the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea. From verse 2 we see that he went from Macedonia into Greece, where he spent three months. At this time he visited the church at Corinth, and it was while here that he wrote the Roman letter. From Corinth he would have sailed for

Syria, but a plot by the Jews caused him to go by land instead of by sea, and this took him again the long way around through Macedonia, across to Troas, where he visited with the church. Then from Troas he sailed south towards Miletus, where he sent word to the elders of the church at Ephesus to meet him. The fact that Paul could take off a few hours wherever it pleased him has caused some to think Paul and his company either chartered a boat for their use, or that Paul was well enough acquainted with the owner to get special favors.

Golden Text Explained

1. Tend the Flock of God. The King James version has the word *feed* instead of *tend*. But the word used here includes more than simply feeding the flock; it includes taking care of the flock, protecting the sheep from wild animals. From this we conclude that elders of the church have the duty, first, to feed, to teach and nourish in sound doctrine those under their care. After telling the brethren to respect and esteem the elders, Paul told the elders to "admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all." (1 Thess. 5: 14.) The elders must be "apt to teach" because their duty is to feed those under their care. Next, they are to take care of their flock. As sheep become diseased, so the flock of God may become sick (1 Cor. 11: 30), and need the care of the shepherd. And as sheep are torn and devoured by wild animals, so the flock of God may be torn by wolves in sheep's clothing. It is the duty of elders to keep these wolves out of the flock, but if they get in, or arise from among the flock, and do harm, it is the duty of elders to restore the sheep to soundness of faith. Paul sums up the twofold duty of elders by saying, "Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers." (Titus 1: 9.) Exhorting in sound doctrine is feeding, and convicting the gainsayer is protecting the flock from false teachers.

2. Exercising: the Oversight. These words are the translation of one Greek word, which is translated by some as "doing the duty of a bishop." It is a form of the word which means bishop, so from this we learn that elders were to do the work of a bishop. And since the word for bishop means *overseer*, we know that elders are to be the overseers of the church. Paul says they "rule over" us, and that we are to obey them, submit to them. (Heb. 13: 7.) The word *rule* here is from a word which means "leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel." (Thayer.) In 1 Tim. 5: 17, the word *rule* comes from a word which means "to be over, to superintend, to preside over." (Thayer.) In matters of faith the authority of elders is in teaching and applying scriptural principles. In matters of indifference they rule by influence and counsel. If it is the duty of elders to rule, it is our duty to submit to their rule; and those who refuse to submit are rebels in the kingdom of Christ. In matters of faith they teach us the will of God, and exhort us to follow it, and discipline us if we refuse. In matters of indifference there may be varied opinions among the brethren, but when the elders make a decision it is our duty to drop our various opinions as to what is best to do and support the decision of the elders. To refuse to do so is to despise their authority, hinder the progress of the church, and if we become active in our opposition to their decision, we sow discord and bring division in the church.

3. **Not of Constraint.** Elders are to be willing to exercise oversight. Paul says "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Tim. 3: 1.) The office should not be imposed upon one against his desires. The constraining force may be public sentiment, but one should not be an elder simply because the public thinks he should do it. Or it may be from fear of punishment if he does not take the office. But one who is moved by such

constraining forces will not put his heart into his work. One should be an elder because of his love for souls and his desires to see the church prosper and do the work God intends for it to do in the community. And Peter adds that this is according to the will of God. There is need for more teaching and training of young men that they may be qualified to be elders when they have become of proper age. We train preachers, but do too little about training elders.

Exposition of the Text

I. Charge to the Elders (Acts 20: 28-31)

Take heed to yourselves. Elders should be careful of their walk for two reasons. First, because they are examples to the flock, and many pattern their lives after them. Since we have no women in this office to set examples for young women, the elders must be examples for young women as well as men. So no elder should have any habit which the purest girl in the church should not have. If elders smoke, or drink beer at a tavern, how can they reprove a young lady in the church for doing the same? Second, elders should take heed to themselves because enemies of the church are watching to find fault and criticize them to the hurt of the church.

And to all the flock. The elders are to take heed to the flock. This means that they are to feed and care for the church. They watch for souls and will have to give account of them in the day of judgment. (Heb. 13: 17.) Too many elders are not even acquainted with all the members of the congregation. They should know each person well enough to know the needs of each one, to advise and counsel, to encourage, or reprove and rebuke as the need may be.

Holy Spirit hath made you bishops. It was the Holy Spirit who determined the qualifications and revealed them to the church, and he through the selection of the church and the appointment of Paul had made these men bishops. The word bishop means overseer, and this is one who sees that others do the work. A man who does not possess the ability to lay out work and organize workers so as

to get the job done can never be a bishop in the church.

The church which he purchased. The fact that Jesus purchased the church with his blood indicates the value of it, and this value is the reason why these elders should take heed to the welfare of the church. They have been entrusted with a priceless possession of the Lord, and they are to keep it in pure and holy condition; they are to be watchful. The fact that Jesus purchased (acquired) the church with his blood proves that his death is an atonement for sins, it is the ground of our redemption; his death is more than that of a martyr for his cause.

Grievous wolves shall enter. This may be considered as another reason why the elders are to take heed to the church. This refers to false teachers, and the fact that Paul calls them wolves suggests something as to their character and tactics. They are deceitful; they sneak in under the guise of true servants of the Lord. But they are there only to devour.

From among yourselves. This suggests apostasy among the elders. The fact that Paul said men would "arise" means that they were not then of that character, and since this is true we can account for them later only on the ground that some of them would apostatize. The way these wolves harm the flock is set forth in these words, "Speaking perverse things." By this is meant false doctrines, so error will do harm when taught and believed. It is the duty of elders to know the truth, be able to recognize error, and stop the mouths of any who may teach it. (Titus 1: 10, 11.) Paul further says

these wolves will "draw away the disciples after them." Preachers who divide churches, take a portion of the members off, to have a place to preach without having to move from town, will do well to reflect that Paul classifies them as wolves.

I admonished night and day with tears. Notice (1) Paul's work of admonishing; (2) the time, night and day, in season and out of season, continuously; (3) his perseverance, for he said "I ceased not" to admonish; and (4) his solicitous, anxious, affectionate care for them, admonishing them with tears. It was not a cold, heartless, job of doing so much work for so much money. Preachers who would put in more time, and put forth more effort, if they were paid more, are, to say the least of it, not the kind of preacher Paul was. Paul wished these elders to be watchful for the church because (1) Jesus purchased it with his blood; (2) because the Holy Spirit had made them bishops, workmen with the duty to feed and watch; and (3) because he had invested three years of labor and tears in building the church.

II. Commendation and Exhortation.

(Acts 20: 32-35)

I commend you to God. He points them to God as one who will care for and direct them, and give them strength and courage to do their duty, as well as the one to whom they are accountable for the work they do in overseeing the church. "Whatever you want, go to God, let your eye be ever towards him, and your dependence upon him, in all your straits and difficulties; and let this be your comfort, that you have a God to go to, a God all sufficient." (Henry.)

And to the word of his grace. "I commend you to God, as your Master, whom you are to serve, and I have found him a good Master, ***and to the word of his grace***, as cutting you out your work, and by which you are to govern yourselves; observe the precepts of this word, and then live upon the promises of it." (Henry.) This word of grace is able to do two things. (1) It can build you up, edify. As timbers rightly placed in a building give it added strength and beauty, so additional truths learned

from God's word makes us stronger and our lives to be more like that of Jesus. (2) God's word gives us an inheritance among the sanctified. It contains the promises of this inheritance, and it reveals the conditions upon which we may expect to receive it, and it exerts a sanctifying influence upon us which fits us for that inheritance.

I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Paul was not a wealthy man, and he did not wish to become one. The only use he had for money was to live and preach the gospel to others. And he was not concerned about living on such a high social plane that took all his time and effort to acquire enough money to finance him on that plane. We may not covet a man's gold, but too many of us have too great a desire to live like the other man, and this desire forces us to use our money for things less important than saving souls. The fact that Paul did not use his office and influence to make money is proof of the genuineness of his conversion. His enemies could not argue that he made the change for personal gain.

These hands ministered to my necessities. This is a reference to the fact that he worked with his hands to support himself and those who labored with him. When it is evident that preachers are interested more in making money than in saving souls, they have no influence with people; but when all men realize that the preacher is willing to make sacrifices to save souls, his influence is good and people will have confidence in him.

I gave you an example. Paul did not mention his working with his hands to boast, but to serve as an example to them. He often exhorted people to follow his example. (1 Cor. 11: 1; Phil. 3: 17.) And he often taught people, by example and word, the attitude they should have toward money, and how they should use it. (2 Cor. 9: 6-8; Gal. 6: 6-10; 1 Tim. 6: 6-10, 17-19.) He teaches that one reason for laboring is to help the weak, and this reminds us of his teaching to these same people that we should work to have something to give. (Eph. 4: 28.)

It is more blessed to give than to

receive. These words the four gospel writers failed to record, but they are none the less the words of Jesus. And why? Because it makes us like God who gave his Son to die for us; it makes us like Christ who gave up his home in heaven to come to earth to die on the cross that we might live; and it makes us like the great apostle Paul who labored that he might give the word of God to lost souls without charge. And we might add that it is because God rewards the giver for giving, but there is no reward to the receiver for receiving. This is another instance where the worldly point of view differs from the spiritual. The philosophy of the world is to get all you can, from all you can, in any way you can; be sure to get, and get plenty. But the heavenly-minded way is to give all you can, for the relief of as many as you can, to glorify God as much as you can.

III. Prayerful Departure (Acts 20: 36-38)

He kneeled down and prayed. When Jesus had taught his disciples a long lesson, he concluded with a prayer before he was to be taken from them. (John 14-17.) So Paul taught the brethren and then prayed for and with them. Matthew Henry points out that (1) this was a joint prayer, since it is said Paul prayed with them all. Jesus promises blessings to us when we agree in prayer. (Matt. 18: 19.) (2) It was a humble reverent prayer, as suggested by their kneeling on the ground. They were not ashamed to pray amid the busy scenes of business life. (3) It is assumed that they would pray for the things which Paul mentioned in his sermon with reference to the church,

and of course for the safety of Paul on his way. (4) It was a parting prayer, and so a time when each would express his love for the others and ask God to care for the others. It was a time when their hearts were stirred and their love revived and strengthened. We are prone to avoid such experiences until our souls are impoverished and we are incapable of the deep affection which we could otherwise enjoy, and which would move us to do more for each other.

They all wept sore. This is an indication of the affection they had for him. Being of an affectionate nature, Paul caused others to love him dearly. "These tears at parting with Paul were a grateful return for all the tears he had shed in preaching to them and in praying with them." (Henry.) And in oriental fashion they each "fell on Paul's neck and kissed him." No doubt as they did so there were expressions of gratitude and appreciation for all he had done for them and for all he meant to them.

They should behold his face no more. This was the source of their greatest grief. They fell on his neck and kissed him, as was the custom with many orientals of that time. This was the case with Joseph when he found his brother (Gen. 45: 14); and with the father when the prodigal returned. (Luke 15: 20.) The word for kiss is a compound word which suggests tenderness, and it is in the imperfect tense which suggests repeated action—kissed tenderly again and again. Supposing this to be their last time ever to see him, they were the more sorrowful at parting with him. They followed him to his ship that they might be with him as long as possible.

Topics for Discussion

1. The office of the bishop carries a weight of authority, but the man who has to depend wholly upon that to move people to obey him is not what he should be in character. They should be men whose influence because of a Christlike character will cause people to love to follow them.

2. Paul commended elders to the word of God. They should be diligent students of the Bible (1) that they may grow into better teachers

and leaders, and (2) that they may know how to expose false teachers. It would be good for elders to have regular periods of study, and if possible get the aid of a capable teacher to direct them. In cities where there are several congregations it would be well for all the elders in the city to meet regularly for study under capable teachers. A man who will not take time to study and put forth such effort to prepare himself for

better work in the future is not fit to be a bishop.

3. We have the word of God's grace to instruct us how to live, but when we sin through ignorance of that word or through failure to apply it properly

in our lives, we have the throne of his grace to which we may go for forgiveness of that sin. (Heb. 4: 16.) Were it not for this latter provision we could never hope to be saved.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the early history of Miletus?

What do you know of the location of the city?

Where did Paul go when he left Ephesus the first time?

Where did he spend three months on this trip?

Why did he not sail from Corinth to Ephesus for this meeting?

In what city did he stay for worship on Sunday?

Golden Text Explained

What two ideas are suggested by the command to tend the flock?

What qualifications must elders have to feed properly?

What is included in caring properly for the flock?

What conditions in our time make it especially necessary that elders be able to protect the flock?

What is the meaning of the word bishop?

Discuss the meaning of the word rule as it is used with reference to elders?

What respect should we show for the authority and decisions of elders?

How serious a matter is it to refuse to obey the elders?

Why should men accept the office of bishop?

Is there sufficient interest shown in training men to be elders?

Charge to the Elders

Why should elders be careful of their daily walk?

Do you agree with the author that elders should be examples in purity of habits to young women?

How much knowledge must the elder have of his flock to take proper heed to the flock?

How does the Holy Spirit make men bishops?

What statement in our text suggests the value of the church?

What proof do we have here that the death of Christ was necessary to save from sin?

What warning did Paul give these elders as to the future of the church?

What is suggested by the use of the word wolves?

What suggests the apostasy of some in the church at Ephesus?

How may men today characterize themselves as such wolves?

What can you say of Paul's work in Ephesus?

Why did Paul want these elders to be watchful for the church?

Condemnation and Exhortation

To whom did Paul commend them? What is the significance of this?

What is meant by commending them to the word of his grace?

What two things did Paul say God's word could do for them?

What words suggest the unselfishness of Paul?

How did Paul prove his unselfishness? His generosity?

What statement of Jesus does Paul preserve for us?

Why is it more blessed to give than to receive?

Prayerful Departure

Whose example did Paul follow in his praying after teaching?

What is the value of a joint prayer?

What was their posture for prayer? Is this essential to acceptable prayer?

What value is to be attached to such season of stirring of the emotions?

What show of affection did they make in parting?

At what did they sorrow most?

What other examples do we have of such manifestation of affection?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VIII—May 21, 1950

PAUL ARRESTED AT JERUSALEM

The Lesson Text

Acts 21: 27-40

27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from A'-si-a, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Is'-ra-el,

help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place.

29 For they had before seen with him in the city Troph'-i-mus the E-phe'-sian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut.

31 And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Je-ru'-sa-lém was in confusion.

32 And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded

him to be brought into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd;

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek?

38 Art thou not then the E-gyp'-tian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?

39 But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tar'-sus in Ci-li'-ci-a, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 21: 13b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 21: 19-26.

Daily Bible Readings

May 15. M.....Must Lose Our Life to Save It (Matt. 16: 21-28)
 May 16. T.....We Must Bear Our Own Cross (Luke 14: 25-35)
 May 17. W.....Men Hazard Their Lives for Christ (Acts 15: 22-29)
 May 18. T.....Some Things Paul Suffered for Christ (2 Cor. 11: 22-28)
 May 19. F.....Old Testament Worthies Our Examples (Heb. 11: 32-40)
 May 20. S.....Suffering and Sacrifice Rewarded (Mark 10: 23-31)
 May 21. S.....Be Thou Faithful Unto Death (Rev. 2: 8-11)

TIME.—A.D. 58.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Paul, Trophimus, the chief captain, and the Jews.

Introduction

It will be remembered that Paul had taken a collection of money for the poor saints in Judaea, and that at the time of our lesson he was on his way to deliver the money to the elders of the church for proper distribution. (Acts 24: 17.) After leaving Ephesus, his next stop for a visit was with the brethren at Tyre, where he rested for seven days while the ship was being unloaded. While there some of the brethren received a revelation as to what would befall Paul in Jerusalem, and they advised him not to go to Jerusalem. But

when they saw that their counsel would not keep him from going, they accompanied him to his ship to say farewell. But before doing so they, kneeling on the sands of the shore, prayed with Paul for his safety. Paul next visited for one day with brethren at Ptolemais, and then came to Caesarea where he spent some time in the home of Philip, who was one of the seven deacons chosen in Jerusalem for proper distribution of food. (Acts 6.) Here again Paul was warned by Agabus, a prophet, that he would suffer persecution if

he went to Jerusalem. The brethren insisted with tears that Paul should not go, but Paul said he was willing to die if it be the will of the Lord. Such courage and willingness to suffer made Paul a great servant of the Lord. His attitude in this matter is well expressed in these words, "But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus,

to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20: 24.) With Paul there was something far more important than his ease, convenience, or even life itself, and this was fulfilling the mission which God had for him in life. If each one of us could determine what God would have him do, and then do that regardless of the cost in money, time, effort, or suffering, we would accomplish a lot more for the Lord than we are doing.

Golden Text Explained

1. **I Am Ready.** What a note of confidence is this! What a quiet calm assurance it gives! Paul was ready (1) because of having established the proper relationship with Christ. He was in Christ where there is no condemnation. (Rom. 8: 1.) Having been baptized into Christ where there is redemption through his blood (Eph. 1: 7), Paul was not standing on his own merits, but in the shed blood of Christ which atoned for all his sins. He was ready (2) because of his duties well performed. Obedience to Christ is essential to salvation, but it is not the ground of salvation, it does not merit salvation. (Heb. 5: 8, 9.) He could say he had fought a good fight, had finished the course, and had kept the faith (2 Tim. 4: 7), and could confidently look forward to the crown of life which Jesus would give him. And he was ready (3) because of his divorcement from this world. He did not love the world so much that he hated to leave it. He was not enjoying worldly pleasures so much that he hated to leave here for the other world. His continual sufferings which he bore, his love for the Lord, and the repulsiveness of sin about him had so completely weaned him from this world that he was anxious to leave here for that better world above. (Phil. 1: 23.) Too many of us love this world so much that we do not want to leave it even for heaven.

2. **To be Bound or to Die.** Paul's view of death made it possible for him to make this statement. To him, death was a release from a world of sorrow and suffering, and an entrance into a world of peace and joy beyond expression. Only his sense of duty to his fellowman was sufficient to

cause him even to desire to live any longer on earth. This statement reminds us of Peter's statement to Jesus on the night of his betrayal and arrest. When Jesus suggested that Peter would deny him, Peter replied, "Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." (Matt 26: 35.) Peter boasted of his loyalty, and Paul's statement affirms his willingness to die. But "self-trusting Peter failed in the testing hour," while the "Christ-trusting Paul went on to win the martyr's crown." Peter boasted of what he would do without knowing what he was talking about; he had not faced death a hundred times. Paul spoke from experience in which he had suffered everything men could do to another. Peter's statement was like that of untried youth; Paul's statement was that of seasoned age. Peter said, I can do anything; Paul said I can do all things if Christ strengthen me. (Phil. 4: 13.) It should be remembered that this statement was made when Paul's affectionate brethren were trying to get him to turn from what he considered the path of duty. They pressed him until he said they were breaking his heart. So it meant the sacrifice of the dearest friends he had on earth, as well as the loss of his life. But he was willing to suffer both to do what he considered to be his duty.

3. **For the Name of the Lord.** To do a thing for the name of the Lord Jesus is to do it for the sake of Jesus Christ; to do it because Jesus wants it done; to do it for the glory and honor which Jesus would derive from it. So Paul would (1) honor the name of the Lord in the performance of his duty. It is a wonderful thing

that poor frail mortals, worms of the dust, can do anything to honor God. Yet such is the privilege of even the least among us. Paul would (2) honor the Lord in his sufferings. Paul wrote from prison that his sufferings had helped the progress of the gospel of Christ, and that "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death." (Phil. 1: 12, 20.) His enemies thought they got rid of him and his influence when

they imprisoned him, but Paul said his sufferings were making others bold to preach the gospel, and that his suffering would magnify, glorify, Christ for whom he suffered. And if death in Jerusalem would glorify Christ, Paul was ready to suffer that Christ might get glory. It should be our aim to glorify Christ. If permitted to live, then live in such way as to glorify him; but if subjected to death, die bravely in his honor.

Exposition of the Text

I. Paul Put Out of Temple (Acts 21: 27-30)

Seven days were almost completed. There is difference of opinion as what seven days are here in the mind of Luke. Some think it refers to the days of the feast preceding and including Pentecost on account of which Paul hastened to Jerusalem. (Acts 20: 16.) Others think it refers to the days of purification mentioned in verse 26, and probably this is right. Paul was going through some rite of purification, with certain Jews, and was paying the expense which the law of Moses required in connection with it, all for the purpose of quieting the fears of the brethren with reference to him. (Acts 21: 20-26.) Some suppose these men were taking the Nazarite vow (Num. 6), but this is only a guess. Paul had not been in Jerusalem seven days, so he did not begin the process of purification with them. But Barnes cites a law which allowed a man to share expense of the Nazarite vow with those taking it who did not have enough money to complete it. It is probably significant that Paul was not given time to complete this vow. He did it on the judgment of James and others, and not by direction of the Holy Spirit.

Jews from Asia saw him. These Jews were probably from Ephesus, as they knew Trophimus who is later called the Ephesian. Being there for Pentecost, they would be watching for Paul, and eager to tell others of his teaching concerning the law of Moses and his work among the Gentiles. Notice the accusations they brought against Paul. 1. Concerning his teaching. They said he teaches *all men everywhere*. This was quite a

compliment to Paul. But they accused him of teaching *against the people*, that is, the Jews. This was an appeal to the crowd, the mob; it was intended to put the people against Paul. Next, they said he teaches against the law. This was an appeal to the prejudice of the people. They loved their law, and were jealous for its honor. True, they did not know the law, or they would have believed in Christ, (John 5: 46, 47.) But when their leaders told them their law was being preached against, they were ready to kill the accused. Next, they accused Paul of teaching against Jerusalem and the temple. That was a sacred place to all Jews. It was easy to excite them to kill anyone who would speak evil of it. 2. Concerning his actions. They accused him of bringing Greeks into the temple and defiling it. They wished to impress the people with the idea that Paul had no regard for the sacredness and purity of that holy place. 3. Notice the basis of their claims. They saw Paul and Trophimus walking together in the city, and they *supposed* Paul had brought him into the temple. Their accusation was that Paul had brought Greeks, more than one, for they had seen him in the city with one Greek. They exaggerated the number, and the whole thing was based on a supposition. Such is religious prejudice and hatred.

And all the city was moved. Notice the effect of these accusations on the people. 1. They were stirred; not just a few, but all the city. Word passed from one to many, and from many to all the city; it spread like wildfire, as only religious prejudice can do. 2. They laid hold on Paul; they took hold of him as hungry dogs

take hold of meat; and they dragged him out of the temple. 3. They shut the doors. These were not the doors to the holy place where the shewbread was kept, for even the Jews were not allowed there; but this was the court of the Israelites which was separate from the court of the Gentiles. The leaders got Paul out of the temple on the pretext that they wished to keep it from being defiled, but the truth is they got him out so they could kill him.

II. Paul Rescued by Soldiers (Acts 21: 31-36)

Tidings came to the chief captain.

This verse shows what was the intention of those Jews who excited the mob. The chief captain was a ruler of one thousand men, though his band did not always have that many in it, sometimes less than half that number. He was stationed in the temple area in a tower seventy cubits, or 105 feet, high. And the number of soldiers was increased during the feasts for just such tumults as this. This chief captain's name was Claudius Lysias. (Acts 23: 26.) When this captain arrived on the scene, the Jews quit beating Paul. The chief captain bound Paul with chains, perhaps to satisfy the Jews as much as to be sure of keeping Paul from escaping. It was customary to bind a man's arms to the arms of two soldiers, one on either side, so as to keep him safely and yet allow of marching to prison. Already the predictions of Paul's friends were fulfilled; he was bound.

Some shouted one thing, some another. This was in answer to the question of the chief captain as to who Paul was and what he had done. Several accusations had been made to stir them up, so it is reasonable that they would answer differently. But, too, that is characteristic of mobs ruled by excitement. When churches have trouble, no two members can agree on what the trouble is about, how it started, and who is to blame for it.

To be brought into the castle. The word for castle here does not mean the building proper, but into that portion of the building occupied by the soldiers, or the barracks. This part of the building was a tower on

the southeast corner of what was called the Tower of Antonia, a name given by Herod the Great in honor of his friend Mark Antony, and overlooked the temple area from the north.

The violence of the crowd. The mob had gone mad; they had the taste of blood, and they were disappointed in being denied their satisfaction. It was necessary for the soldiers to pick up Paul bodily and carry him to get him up the stairs of the castle. We think people today are too refined to do such, but crowds at an unusual bargain sale, or a mob gathered on account of racial differences will soon prove that people can be stampeded now as easily as they were in Paul's day.

Crying out, Away with him. This reminds us of the same cry made about thirty years before in this same city. Jesus was the object of their hatred then. They made false accusations then to excite the mob against him, and when Pilate said he was not worthy of death, they cried out all together, Away with this man. (Luke 23: 18.) Through intimidation they forced Pilate to crucify Jesus and now these people hope to make such a demonstration that Lysias will feel it necessary to put Paul to death.

III. Paul Identified to the Captain. (Acts 21: 37-40)

May I say something unto thee?

It has been suggested that Paul was about the only man in Jerusalem who was calm and undisturbed. The leaders were mad with rage that Paul had been taken from them before they killed him; the people were beside themselves with jealous excitement; and the chief captain was afraid he was in for serious trouble. But Paul had committed himself to God, determined to honor Christ in life and in death, willing to die and be at rest or to live and be busy. So as long as he had life he would serve his Lord, and to do this he had to speak, and for this he asks the privilege.

Dost thou know Greek? Once more Paul's education served him well. Barnes takes this to mean that the captain meant if Paul could speak Greek he would be allowed 'to

speak. But it seems more obvious to think that Paul addressed the captain in Greek, and the question of the captain expresses his surprise that Paul could speak Greek.

Art thou not then the Egyptian? Paul's ability to speak Greek seemed sufficient to convince the captain that Paul was not the Egyptian he first thought him to be. It had not been long since an Egyptian had led quite a lot of people to think he could deliver Jerusalem into their hands. Josephus says he gathered 30,000 men in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives, telling them he could cause the walls of the city to fall, and they would march in and take the city. Felix, the governor, learned of the movement and sent soldiers to break up the gathering, killed 400 and took 200 as prisoners. But the Egyptian escaped, and the captain thought Paul was this man returned.

Four thousand men of the Assassins. Since Josephus says the number was 30,000, some have criticized the Bible for an incorrect statement. But it must be remembered that Luke did not say the Egyptian had 4,000 men. Luke simply reports that the captain said the Egyptian led off 4,000. Whether the captain was right, or Josephus, we have no way of knowing; but judging from his exaggerations about other things, we may safely conclude that the captain might have been nearer right than Josephus. The word for assassins was the name of a class of men who used a certain weapon, called the *sica*, a short curved dagger. They carried it under their coat, and mingling with great crowds, they stabbed their victims,

and then joined with the people in expressions of indignation that they might not be detected. All who had joined this order were called Assassins whether they had ever killed anybody or not. Yet no one joined the band unless he was willing to murder.

I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia. There was a time when Paul was very proud of the fact that he was a Jew, and that he could trace his ancestry back to Abraham. (Phil.

3.) But it did not mean so much to him at this time, except for the purpose of quieting the fears and relieving the prejudice of his hearers. Tarsus was the principal city of south-eastern Asia Minor, the country now called Turkey. Coins of that day used in Tarsus carry the word *Metropolis*, denoting the standing of the city with reference to others in that area. It is said to have been celebrated for its learning, and was the home of a great university.

Give me leave to speak unto the people. Paul wished to preach the gospel to this mob who had falsely accused him and tried to murder him. Many of us would have concluded that preaching to such people was casting pearls before swine, and we would have felt no further responsibility for them nor inclination to try to save them. But Paul loved souls, and was willing to suffer to save them. He did not easily give up in his effort to save them. He spoke to them in their language in the hope they would give more respectful attention to it than they would give if he spoke in another language.

Topics for Discussion

1. That Paul was not a hard-headed self-willed man unwilling to listen to the advice of brethren is proved from the fact that he took the advice of James and the elders to go through the rite of purification. Some have thought Paul was influenced to do wrong, but if so, he did such without the influence of others at another time. (Acts 18: 18.)

2. People should form the habit of thinking for themselves, and refuse to be stampeded into action to accomplish the unholy desires of de-

signing men. Few things have to be done in such a hurry that we cannot afford to take out time to think about them and pray for wisdom to act when doing them.

3. The calmness of Paul in these troublous times is an example of the peace that passeth understanding which comes to them who cast their care upon God. Like David of old, Paul could say, "Jehovah is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalms 118: 6.)

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Why was Paul going to Jerusalem at this time?

Where was his first stop after leaving Ephesus? How long did he stay?

Of what was he warned while at Tyre?

Whom did Paul visit in Caesarea?

What prophet warned him of suffering in Jerusalem?

How did Paul value his life as compared with other things?

Golden Text Explained

What relationship had Paul established which made him ready to die?

What part does obedience to God have in our preparation to die?

What view must one have of the world and worldly things to be ready to die?

What was Paul's idea of death?

What other apostle said he was willing to die for the Lord?

Contrast Peter's boast with Paul's assertion in our text.

What is meant by doing something for the name of the Lord?

In what two ways did Paul expect to honor the Lord?

How did Paul's suffering contribute to the glory of Christ?

Paul Put Out of Temple

To what seven days is reference made here?

Why was Paul going through the rite of purification?

Do you know what kind of vow these brethren had taken?

Did Paul complete the ceremony? Why?

Why were Jews from Asia in Jerusalem at this time?

What accusations did they make concerning Paul's teaching?

What accusations did they make concerning his actions?

What basis did they have for these accusations?

What three things show how these accusations affected the people?

Paul Rescued by Soldiers

Who rescued Paul from the people? What do you know of him?

What precaution did the captain take for Paul's safety?

What answer did the people give the captain concerning Paul?

What do you know of the castle into which Paul was brought?

What did the violence of the people make it necessary for the soldiers to do?

How do the actions of the people here compare with those who cried for the blood of Jesus?

Paul Identified to the Captain

What can you say of Paul's attitude during this uproar?

In what language did Paul address the captain?

For whom did the captain mistake Paul?

What do you know of the Egyptian's effort to take Jerusalem?

Who were the Assassins? Why were they so called?

Does Luke contradict Josephus as to the number the Egyptian led off?

What do you know of Tarsus?

What can you say for Paul's love for the lost? His willingness to do good to those who persecuted him?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IX—May 28, 1950

PAUL ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE

The Lesson Text

Acts 22: 1-8, 19-25

1 Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.

2 And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith,

3 I am a Jew, born in Tar'-sus of Ḳι-Ἰ-ḱi-a, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Ga-ma'-Ἰ-ḱi, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day:

4 And I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of

the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Da-mas'-cus to bring them also that were there unto Je-ru'-sa-lḱm in bonds to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Da-mas'-cus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Je'-sus of Naz'-a-reth, whom thou persecutest.

19 And I said, Lord, they them-

selves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of Ste'-phēn thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gen'-tiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and *i* aid, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him.

25 And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision"* (Acts 26: 19)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—(Acts 22: 9-18.)

Daily Bible Readings

- May 22. M.....Paul's Teaching on Treatment of Enemies (Rom. 12: 9-21)
 May 23. T.....Suffer Wrong Rather Than Do Wrong (1 Cor. 6: 1-11)
 May 24. W.The Secret of Contentment (Phil. 4: 4-13)
 May 25. T.....Paul's Joy in Possessing Christ (Phil. 3: 1-16)
 May 26. F.....Things to Put Off And Things to Put On (Col. 3: 5-17)
 May 27. S.....Paul Gentle in Approach to Hearers (1 Thess. 2: 1-12)
 May 28. S.....Paul's Charge to Young Preachers (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)

TIME.—A.D. 58.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Paul and his Jewish audience.

Introduction

"It was a very remarkable promise which our Lord made to his apostles, when, forewarning them that they should be delivered up to councils, and brought before kings and rulers for his sake, he added, 'But when they so deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit.' (Mark 13: 9-11.) It is impossible not to see a fulfillment of this promise in St. Paul's apology delivered from the castle stairs at Jerusalem to an infuriated and bloodthirsty mob. A Jewish riot had something terrific in it, something dreaded even by iron-minded Romans. The features all contorted with passion, the large eyes starting out of their sockets, the savage grinding of the teeth, the fierce cries, the wild throwing of handfuls of dust into the air, the tossing and waving of their garments

with an unbridled violence, gave a demoniac aspect to such rioters. (Renan, p. 524.) Paul had just come out of the thick of such a mob. He had barely escaped with his life, but not without many blows. He had heard his name given to execration, held up to detestation as the author of blasphemies and sacrilege and as the enemy of his race. . . . And yet, when he had scarce recovered breath after the struggle for life, we find him with the chains on his wrists, but with unruffled spirit, and admirable composure and self-possession, delivering to his enemies and would-be murderers a speech as gentle, as firm, as calm, as collected, and as logical, as if he had composed and prepared it at leisure in the stillness of his own study, and was addressing it to a congregation of friends and admirers. Must it not have been given to him in that hour what to speak, and how to say it? . . . His Hebrew speech, his thoroughly Jewish atti-

tude, his high-minded earnestness, his splendid courage seem to have wrought to some extent upon his volatile and mobile hearers. But he could not stop there. He had a further message to deliver, and it must be delivered at Jerusalem, the mother church, not only of the circumcision, but of the whole Gentile world. That message was that Christ was to be preached to the Gentiles, and that Jews and Gentiles were to be henceforth one in Christ. And that message he delivered with chains on his

arms, from the midst of a Roman cohort, to the angry crowd beneath him, having obviously one single purpose—to speak the truth, and to do his duty both to God and man. ... As it is the apology enables us to enumerate the great apostle's virtues as combining in an extraordinary degree, courage, gentleness, calmness, vigour, wisdom, eloquence, and a passionate zeal for the glory of Christ and for the salvation of men." (Pulpit Commentary.)

Golden Text Explained

1. **The Heavenly Vision.** In these words Paul refers to the appearance of Jesus to him as he traveled towards Damascus. (Acts 9.) It was a miraculous experience. Jesus appeared and talked with him, outlining in very general terms the work he had for Paul to do, in these words, "To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26: 16-18.) It was a vision of opportunities to serve Jesus, to save souls, and to save himself from the destruction to which his present course was leading him. We do not have miraculous visions today; the Lord does not appear and talk to us outlining the course we should follow in life; but the fact that he does not do so miraculously is no proof that he does not give us visions of our life's work. He can use natural means to give us visions of fields ripe for harvest. And these visions are as much from the Lord as was Paul's, and the necessity for heeding and obeying them is just as great. What Christian has not had a new vision of the value of souls? Have we not been impressed by this vision, or deeper understanding, with the importance of doing more to save lost souls? Every Christian who has studied his Bible has had a bet-

ter vision of the excellency of the glory of Jesus Christ. Does not this vision impress us with the urgency of telling others of Jesus that we may honor and glorify him in that way and to that degree redeemed servants should honor their Master? Have you not contemplated the teeming millions of earth who have never heard the gospel of Christ, and has there not come to your mind a vision of usefulness in carrying the gospel to them for their salvation from eternal destruction, and for the glory of Jesus who died to save them? If such impelling visions have never come to your mind, you have not been thinking on the things Christians think about. What are you going to do about these enlarged visions of opportunity?

2. **I Was Not Disobedient.** Paul obeyed the vision; he followed the course of life suggested in the vision. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.) When once Paul beheld the vision and his course in life was determined, to have refused to follow that course would have been disobedience of the rankiest sort. Is it not possible that some of us who read this have beheld the vision of service in some hard field, and have pushed the vision aside struggling to forget it, that we may lead an easier life, hoping to "get by" in the judgment? Teachers may give young people a vision of service as real, not miraculous, and as binding and impelling in its nature as Paul's vision. Through that teaching God is calling young people to fields of service to save souls and glorify Christ. To refuse the call

and live in ease and pleasure, refusing to render the service to which the teaching calls us may mean the loss of eternal life. With Paul obedience to the vision meant (1) getting right with God by obeying the gospel; (2) spending his life in saving others in hard fields of labor; (3) eternal life as his reward. Disobedience to

that vision would have meant (1) remaining condemned out of Christ; (2) living at variance with God's purpose, failing to accomplish what God intended him to do in life; and (3) failing to gain eternal life, suffering the punishment that shall come to all who do not obey the gospel. (2 Thess. 1: 7-10.)

Exposition of the Text

I. Paul's Speech (Acts 22: 1-8, 19-21)

Brethren and fathers. This was a respectful manner of address, though the people addressed did not well deserve it. Hackett suggests that the term *fathers* was used to refer to some of the rulers in the crowd whom Paul recognized.

Hear ye my defence. The Greek word for defense is our word apology. It is the technical Greek word for an answer to accusations. That which follows is therefore Paul's answer to the accusations made in chapter 21: 28ff.

He spake unto them in the Hebrew language. It is said that the Jews love their language more than any other people. "The sound of the holy tongue in the holy place fell like a calm on the troubled waters." (Howson.) Luke suggests they gave attention on account of his use of the Hebrew language when he says *they were the more quiet* when they heard it.

I am a Jew. It had been suggested that Paul might be an Egyptian. When he spoke to the captain in Greek, some might have thought him a foreigner. So it was necessary that he correct these false notions. His accusers had spoken of him as "this man," yet he calls them brethren. And then he tells them he was born in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia.

At the feet of Gamaliel. Though Tarsus was noted for its learning and for a great university located there, Paul tells them he was brought up in *this city*. So careful for his proper training were his parents that they sent him away from home to be taught by his own people the laws and customs of his fathers. His present course of action was not on account of being taught by heathen teachers. Gamaliel was one of the greatest teachers ever to be among the Jews. Only seven Jewish teach-

ers were ever given the title of Rabban, and Gamaliel was one of that seven. Rab meant *teacher*, and was used of the lowest class. Rabbi meant *my teacher*, and was applied to the next higher class. Rabban meant *our teacher*, and was given to the highest class. (Vincent.) Having such a teacher, Paul thought to convince them that he had been instructed according to the strict manner of the law of his fathers.

Being zealous for God, even as ye all are. Not only was Paul taught the faith and customs of the fathers, but he was zealous for God as taught in the law. (Gal. 1: 13, 14.) In the words *even as ye all are* Paul tried to tell them that there was a time when he felt and acted just like them about these matters. If something had not happened to him, he would be among them instead of before them making that defense. He then gives proof of his zeal.

I persecuted this Way unto the death. Was greater proof than this needed? As they would now put him to death, there was a time when he felt as they did and acted as they were acting. Whether Paul actually with his own hands killed anyone is not necessarily affirmed, but he was responsible for detecting, arresting, and imprisoning Christians who died for Christ.

The high priest doth bear me witness. If Paul was converted in A.D. 36, the high priest was Jonathan, the son of Annas, and successor of Caiaphas who was deposed in A.D. 35. But if Paul was converted in A.D. 37, the high priest was Theophilus, another son of Annas. The high priest and many of the elders living at the time of Paul's conversion were still alive, and may have been in that very audience. Such obvious truths have powerful appeal. Then he tells them of obtaining letters from the

high priest and elders to go to Damascus. This further illustrates his fiery zeal, such as characterized them.

Suddenly there shone from heaven a great light. Paul used to be like these people, but now he is different. Why the change? At this point he begins to tell them why he changed from the persecutor to the persecuted. The men of Athens would not listen to such a story, but to Jews such an appearance of heavenly messengers was not unbelievable. His change was not for fame, honor, wealth, or position; it was brought about by a heavenly visitor. The fact that Paul saw this light at noon made it all the more impossible for him to be deceived.

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Paul keeps before his audience the idea that he was on a mission of persecution. And since this heavenly messenger says Paul was persecuting him, this links the messenger with the people Paul persecuted. Paul was anxious at that time to know who this messenger was, and he used this means to lead his audience to wish to know, too.

I am Jesus of Nazareth. No doubt many were at this Pentecost feast who were at the Passover feast many years before when Jesus of Nazareth was condemned and crucified. And surely all of them had heard the story of his resurrection. None of this audience had believed it, but they allowed Paul to speak of it. Paul had two dangerous hurdles to get over in this speech—the mention of the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and the acceptance of Gentiles. He succeeds in getting over this first one without interruption.

Lord, they know that I imprisoned. There is a skip from verse 8 to verse 18 in our text, in which Paul tells of the conversation he had with Jesus, how he became a Christian and how he returned, after three years (Gal. 1: 17, 18), to preach Christ in Jerusalem. But the Lord appeared to him again and told him to get out of Jerusalem because the people would not listen to him. It is then that he argued the matter with the Lord, thinking surely the people who worked with him in persecuting Christians would want to know why he had made the change. They knew

his sincerity; they knew he would not change for trivial reasons. He wanted to tell them why he changed, so he might lead his associates in persecution to make the same change.

When the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed. The word for witness is our word martyr, but hardly had our meaning at that time. He was a witness, one who testified for Christ. And on account of that witnessing he was put to death. And when many had sealed their testimony with their blood, the word for witness came to have the meaning of one who died for Christ, a martyr. Paul reminded them of Stephen's death because it was well known, and it is possible that some in that very audience remembered it. Again, he appealed to things so obviously true and of common knowledge among them that his speech was most convincing. He did not take part in throwing of stones, but since he held the coats of the men who did, he was as guilty as they.

I will send thee unto the Gentiles. This is still the language of the Lord in that vision which Paul had while praying in the temple three years after his conversion. The Lord told him his testimony would not be received in Jerusalem. The church would not give him a good reception on account of his work of persecution; and the Jews would kill him for turning from them and against them. So he must go to the Gentiles. This was the second dangerous hurdle Paul had to get over in his speech. The very mention of preaching to Gentiles was too much. The idea of recognizing them, who were as dogs in the sight of the proud Jew, was more than they could stand.

II. Effect of His Speech (Acts 22: 22-25)

They gave him audience to this word. The very mention of Gentiles as converts was not repulsive to Jews, for they themselves would go over land and sea to make one proselyte. (Matt. 23: 15.) But it was Paul's idea of making Gentiles fellow-heirs (Eph. 3: 6) with the Jews and without circumcision that was so repulsive to the Jews.

Away with such a fellow. This was their cry with which they inter-

rupted Paul's speech. They continued by saying, It is not fit that he should live. It was their way of demanding that Paul be put to death. Accompanying this cry were actions consistent with it; they threw off their garments and cast dust into the air. "Then began one of the most odious and despicable spectacles which the world can witness, the spectacle of an oriental mob, hideous with impotent rage, howling, yelling, cursing, gnashing their teeth, flinging about their arms, waving and tossing their blue and red robes, casting dust in the air by handfuls, with all the furious gesticulations of an uncontrolled fanaticism." (Farrar.) That humanity can be capable of such a shameful spectacle is a sad commentary upon the degree of depravity to which human beings have sunk. And to do it in the name of religion only adds to the guilt which attaches to the deed.

He should be examined by scourging. Not being able to understand Paul speaking in the Hebrew language, the captain knew no more about Paul than he did at first. But seeing the crowd go into spasms of rage and excitement, he supposed Paul was guilty of some great sin against the people. So he decided to *examine* by scourging, or whipping. This was to force a confession of his crime. It was what we call the "third degree" which police officers some-

times put the criminal through, though worse with very few exceptions.

They tied him up with the thongs. Instead of the word *with* we have *for* in the margin, which seems the better translation. Meyer and others think this whole phrase should read, "But as they stretched him forth for the thongs." The word *thongs* here most certainly refers to the whip instead of that with which Paul was tied. It was customary to incline the body forward and tie the hands to posts, leaving the back of the victim bare. The thongs were sometimes tied in knots.

Is it lawful to scourge a Roman? The captain was about to violate Roman law in two points, punishing a Roman citizen without trial, and using the scourge as a means of punishment. No Roman citizen since 300 B.C. was subject to scourging. So strict were Roman authorities that even the mention of Roman citizenship was sufficient. The mention of it was enough to throw the magistrates at Philippi into confusion. (Acts 16: 35-39.) At this time it saved Paul from terrible suffering and put him under the protection of the Roman government. From this we learn that we are entitled to enjoy all the liberties and protection afforded by the government under which we live and support through paying of taxes.

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul made six defenses. The first is in this lesson; (2) before the Sanhedrin, (chap. 23); (3) before Felix, (chap. 24); (4) before Festus, (chap. 25); (5) before Agrippa, (chap. 26); (6) before Caesar, (2 Tim. 4: 16).

2. If it was worthwhile to make an effort to convert the people who composed this mob, we need not be afraid of wasting our time, or casting our pearls before swine, by trying to convert people today regardless of what they may do to us. We need not

think of Paul's efforts as wholly fruitless, for seed broadcast will accomplish God's purpose.

3. Notice Paul's spirit of submission when he took issue with an officer of the law. He did not indignantly affirm his rights as a Roman citizen, but asked if the captain was going to whip a Roman and condemned. It is also worthy of attention that Paul did not claim his rights as a Roman citizen to escape whipping at Philippi. Why?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What did Jesus promise to do for his

apostles when they were brought before magistrates?

What do you know about Jewish riots?

What can you say of Paul's attitude during the excitement?

What about Paul appealed to the crowd so as to catch their attention?

What virtues of Paul are manifested in this apology?

Golden Text Explained

Relate the circumstances of the vision referred to in our text.

What course of action was generally outlined to Paul in this vision?

What visions of service and sacrifice are common to Christians today?

May these visions be of God, and yet not be miraculous?

How could Paul have been disobedient to the vision?

What if we do not follow these heaven-made impressions we get from study of God's word, and from our gospel teachers?

What three things are included in Paul's obedience to the vision?

What three things would have been included in his disobedience?

Paul's Speech

How did Paul show respect for his audience?

What is the meaning of the word defense?

In what language did Paul speak? What was its effect on the people?

Why did Paul begin by telling them he was a Jew?

Who was Paul's teacher? In what city? What of his rank among Jews?

What claim did Paul make to Jewish zeal? How did he manifest it in early life?

To whom did Paul appeal to confirm his statements?

What did Paul say was responsible for his change?

How does Jesus identify himself with his people?

What two dangerous hurdles did Paul have to get over in his speech?

What items of interest in the speech are skipped in our text?

What reason did Paul give for thinking the people of Jerusalem would listen to him?

What part did Paul have in the stoning of Stephen?

To whom did Jesus say he would send Paul?

Effect of His Speech

At what point did the mob refuse to listen to Paul?

Why was Paul's work among Gentiles repulsive to them when they worked among them to make proselytes?

Describe the actions of the mob when Paul mentioned the Gentiles.

What is meant by examining by scourging?

Describe the process of scourging.

What two points of Roman law were about to be violated?

What shows the respect Roman officers had for the authority of their law?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson X—June 4, 1950

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE COUNCIL

The Lesson Text

Acts 23: 1-11

1 And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said. Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day.

2 And the high priest An-a-ni'-as commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 And Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sad'-du-cees and the other Phar'-i-sees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Phar'-i-see, a son of Phar'-i-sees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Phar'-i-sees and Sad'-du-cees; and the assembly was divided.

8 For the Sad'-du-cees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Phar'-i-sees confess both.

9 And there arose a great clamor: and some of the scribes of the Phar'-i-sees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Je-ru'-sa-lem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Be of good cheer."* (Acts 23: 11a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.— Acts 23: 12-20.

Daily Bible Readings

May 29. M..... Jesus Gives Peace to His Disciples (John 14: 25-31)
 May 30. T..... Good Cheer In Spite of Tribulation (John 16: 25-33)
 May 31. W..... Cause For Thanksgivings to God (Eph. 3: 14-21)
 June 1. T..... Paul Thankful For Cooperation (Phil. 1: 3-11)
 June 2. F..... Paul Rejoices In Sufferings (Col. 1: 24-29)
 June 3. S..... Paul Thanks God For His Brethren (1 Thess. 1: 2-10)
 June 4. S..... Paul Is Thankful For Growing Faith (2 Thess. 1: 3-12)

TIME.—A.D. 58.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Paul and the council.

Introduction

If no spiritual and eternal blessings could be derived from Christianity, it would still be the greatest blessing to the world of any force known to man because of what it does to lead us to be kind to each other, and deal fairly with our fellow-man. Where Christian principles are known, such treatment as Paul received in Jerusalem is unknown. Men who have been influenced by the teaching of Christ will not descend to such depths of vice. There are a few countries in the world today where such things can happen, and they may be divided into two classes. One is where the ruling element is positively irreligious; they have no faith in God, and are set to destroy all that professes to be the religion set forth in the Bible. These are the forces we call Communism. The other class of countries where such treatment can be given is a religious type, but one that has perverted the true religion of Jesus Christ. In those countries completely dominated by the Catholic Church the priests keep the people ignorant of the Bible. They have not even made the progress in other ways that protestant nations have made. When protestant missionaries go among them, the priests stir up the people to persecute the missionaries. Re-

ports in religious journals often tell of such treatment as Paul received before this council. We who live in a land where the Bible is freely circulated, and where we have unrestricted freedom to believe and teach it as we see fit, should be very grateful to God for this liberty. And if we practice the Golden Rule, we will do our utmost to take these blessings to people of other countries. If we were denied this freedom, would we appreciate someone coming to us with such teaching as would give us freedom? Then do to others as we would that they do to us. Taking the truth to these countries and giving the people the freedom we enjoy will cost a lot of time, effort, and maybe some lives. Giving the gospel to the world cost many lives in the time of Paul. He gave his life to give the world the gospel. But we are glad he did it; we think his life, and that of others, were well spent. Many young men give their lives in war that we may have political freedom. Is it unreasonable that people be asked to give their lives to bring spiritual freedom to people who have it not? If spiritual freedom, salvation from sin, means more than political freedom, then it is better to give one's life in that cause than to die that others might have political freedom.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Paul's Need of Comfort.** There is a limit to the amount of persecution and contradiction the human frame can endure. Undoubtedly Paul had about reached that point. All of the persecutions outlined in 2 Cor. 11: 23-28 Paul had already

suffered. For months he had been warned by brethren at different places that he would suffer in Jerusalem. He hardly arrived in the city before these predictions began to be fulfilled. The persecution came from men who had known him, and

with whom he worked when he persecuted the church. He had a right to think they would have some respect for his honesty and sincerity, knowing that he had a reputation for such qualities when he worked with them. But in this expectation he was disappointed. The friends and associates of his youthful days no longer respected him. Paul had no family to which he could turn for comfort. He was denied the comfort that could have come from association with the church if he had been allowed to be with and worship with his fellow Christians. "The uppermost thought of his mind would inevitably be that of the disaster of the day. His claim of sincerity had been insulted. His passion for righteousness had been defeated. His purpose of testimony had been frustrated. I believe there settled upon his spirit that night the sense of utter dejection. I believe he was overwhelmed with the sense of his failure in Jerusalem." (G. C. Morgan.)

2. The Source of His Comfort. Paul's comfort that night came from two sources. First, the Lord stood by him. In what manner the Lord stood by him we do not know. Sometimes Paul saw him in vision as at his conversion; again he saw him in trance. (Acts 22: 17, 18.) The Lord was with him always, even as he is with us today. But this must mean something more than the manner in which he is with us, for he was with Paul at all times in that manner. So we conclude that the Lord made a special appearance to him and talked with him. The presence of the Lord meant that his action before the council was approved. He had spoken plainly to

the high priest, and had been slapped in the face for it. Was this statement from the Lord, or had he in a moment of anger said more than was right? Such thought may have been a source of anxiety to Paul. But the presence of the Lord removed such anxiety, and Paul could say, If the Lord is for me, who can be against me?

Second, Paul derived comfort from the assurance that he was to go to Rome. Paul had for a long time wished to go to Rome that he might impart some spiritual gift to the church, and make a contribution towards their further and firmer establishment. (Rom. 1: 9-13.) And not being able to read the future, it is possible that Paul thought he would be put to death on this occasion. The Jews were determined to kill him. He knew the influence they could exert. He knew their methods, for he had one time worked with them. He knew that without intervention of the Lord in his behalf that they would kill him. He was not afraid to die, but there were things he wished to do before he died. So when the Lord stood by him and assured him that he would be allowed to live and go to Rome to preach the gospel there, it was a source of great comfort. When in the midst of distressing anxieties the clear bright light of certainty breaks through, there is a calm which follows like that which comes after the storm when the sun shines bright and the howling winds are stilled. The presence of the Lord and his assurance of further service in his kingdom removed his anxieties, calmed his fears, and planted in his heart a blessed assurance.

Exposition of the Text

I. Paul and the High Priest (Acts 23:

5)

Looking stedfastly on the council. Paul would do this for two reasons. First, he would be interested to see if he could recognize any there who had been associated with him when he was persecuting the church. Next, he would naturally be interested in studying the men before whom he was to make his defense, and by whom he was to be judged. This council was called the Sanhedrin, and

was composed of seventy men, elders, scribes, and priests.

I have lived in all good conscience. It is worthy of note that Paul still called these men his brethren, that being a term of respect, though he might well have doubted that they deserved such respect. His first statement was both strong and bold. He was entitled to be regarded as a sincere man, and he wished to make that demand of them at the beginning. He said he had lived *before*

God in all good conscience. Our conscience is that which accuses or excuses us for our actions. And since we are answerable primarily unto God, Paul recognized his conscience as functioning only towards God. This does not mean that he had been sinless, for at one time he was the chief of sinners. But it does mean that he had not knowingly violated his conscience; he did not do things he knew to be wrong. Nor is this to be taken as proof that we should follow our conscience. We follow our judgment. If we do what judgment says is right, our conscience approves.

Ananias commanded them to smite him. This Ananias is not to be confused with the Annas who was associated with Caiaphas in the trial of Jesus. (John 18: 13.) According to Josephus this man was the son of Nebadaeus, and obtained the office of high priest under the procurator Tiberius Alexander in A.D. 48. He is said to have been "a violent, haughty, gluttonous, and rapacious man, and yet looked up to by the Jews." He got mixed up in such trouble that he was sent to Rome for trial. It is not certain whether he retained his office after his return from Rome, though on account of his influence he served as high priest during the time when changes were being made as was often the case during these tumultuous times. To smite on the mouth was an effective way of silencing a speaker, and was the custom of hardened and unkind rulers of that day. Ananias could not conceive of an apostate from the Jewish faith being sincere, and for this reason had Paul silenced in this brutal fashion.

God shall smite thee. Whether Paul meant to make a prediction in these words is not known, but if he did, his words were soon fulfilled. For in A.D. 66 he was pulled from an aqueduct, where he attempted to hide, and was killed by the Sicarii, or Assassins. These words cannot be taken in the sense of imprecation, as Paul would not be guilty of such disposition. This is to be taken as the expression of Paul's firm conviction that a man so unrighteous cannot long be tolerated among the rulers of a nation. He then called this man a "whited wall", or hypocrite. This reminds us of what Jesus

said to men in this same council several years before Paul's time. (Matt. 23: 27, 28.) Then Paul explained why he called the man a hypocrite. The man was sitting as a judge of the law, and yet he had commanded a thing to be done which was contrary to the law. Nicodemus said their law gave a man the right to be heard before he was judged. (John 7: 51.) And the law said every man was entitled to righteous judgment. (Lev. 19: 15. See also Deut. 25: 1, 2.)

Revilest thou God's high priest.

There are some unusual difficulties here. Paul replied that he did not know the man was high priest. But still the passage he cites for paying respect applies not to the high priest only, but to any ruler of the people. Barnes gives a number of interpretations by other writers, but rejects them and says that Paul meant to say he did not regard Ananias as high priest, that he did not actually hold the office at the time, that he committed an error so far beneath the dignity of the office in commanding him to be slapped that he was not worthy of being treated as a high priest. But since the law Paul quotes (Ex. 22: 28) includes any member of the council as a ruler of the people, this explanation seems weak. Commentators generally are not inclined to think Paul made a mistake for which he apologized, and since Jesus promised them guidance as to what to say when in such circumstances (Matt. 10: 19, 20), it is a little difficult to charge Paul with making a mistake. Yet there is the possibility that the strain under which he was laboring, to which was added this gross insult and acute pain, caused Paul to speak without proper consideration. If so, we would read verse 5 in this light, Brethren, for the moment I forgot, did not know or realize, I was speaking to a high priest, and my speech was in violation of the law. Compare Paul's situation and reaction to that of Jesus. (John 18: 22, 23.) From this we might learn that men in the office of elder, or bishop, are due respect for the sake of the office they fill, though their character is not all it should be.

II. The Council Divided (Act 23: 6-9)

One part Sadducees and the other Pharisees. "This word Sadducees is derived from Zadok, the name of the founder of the sect, about 175 B.C. They were the aristocratic and conservative priestly party; they rejected all supplements to the written law, as the Pharisaic traditions, and it seems refused to accept the teaching of the prophets where it was an addition to the words of the law. And such was their reason for denying the resurrection." (Outlines of Bible History—Lanier.) The word Pharisee "means *separated*, and they are said to have originated with the separation of the Jews from foreigners (Ez. 9: 1; Neh. 9: 2), and from the filthiness of the nations. (Ez. 6: 21.) They were the largest of the Jewish sects, and though politically minded at first they were nothing but a religious sect in the time of Jesus. There were two conditions of membership, (1) A pledge to set apart all sacred tithes, and refrain from eating anything which had not been tithed; (2) To observe all laws and traditions concerning purity in food and family relations." (*Ibid.*)

I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. Some have accused Paul of a mistake in this statement, since the Pharisees stood for so many things unchristian, and with which he could not possibly agree, such as their traditions. But Luke names some of the things held by them with which Paul was in agreement with them, and it is obviously these fundamental things which Paul meant to share with them in his belief.

And the assembly was divided. This was a master stroke of strategy on the part of Paul. Knowing how deeply these Jews felt on these party matters, Paul had every reason to hope that he might divide them and win the sympathy of the Pharisees. For with them he shared the belief in a resurrection of the dead, and the existence of angels, and spirits. The Sadducees were the materialists of that day. They believed that man is wholly mortal, and that death ends all; no future state. Paul appealed to the Pharisees to help him root up such doctrines. And for the moment he was successful, for the council was divided along the old party lines,

and the Pharisees threw the weight of their influence on Paul's side.

We find no evil in this man. This is a statement made by some of the scribes on the Pharisee side. Scribes might be either Sadducees or Pharisees, but usually they were associated with the Pharisees. They were the more intellectual among the rulers, and this was in Paul's favor.

What if a spirit hath spoken to him?

Paul had affirmed that Jesus appeared to him, but these scribes refuse to admit that much. However they are so determined to oppose the Sadducees that they pervert Paul's statement and allow that a spirit or angel might have spoken to him. The King James version adds here, "Let us not fight against God." This would suggest that they could believe that a spirit or angel from God could have spoken to Paul, but they would not admit that Jesus of Nazareth had anything to do with Paul. This is still the attitude of orthodox Jews.

III. Paul Rescued and Comforted

(Acts 23: 10, 11)

Fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces. Evidently Paul succeeded in gaining considerable support in the council. Part wished to kill him, but there were enough among the council in sympathy with Paul that they were able to give him protection until the captain arrived with soldiers. "The state of things here described is exactly what the pages of Josephus and of Tacitus disclose as to the combustible state of the Jewish mind just before the commencement of the Jewish war. The Roman power was the only element of quiet and order." (Pulpit Commentary.)

Go down and take him by force. This was the order of the captain, and shows something of the savage intentions of the mob. It is difficult to believe that people can become so much like brutes, especially when they are dealing in religious matters.

The night following the Lord stood by him. "The jaded, harassed, and overwrought spirit needed some unusual support. The Lord whom Paul loved, and for whom he was suffering so much, knew it, and in his tender care for his servant stood by him and spake a word of gracious

encouragement to him." (Pulpit Commentary.) The encouragement came immediately. It is comforting to us to know that the Lord sees and feels the insults and sufferings his servants endure.

Be of good cheer. One with less faith and understanding might have thought there was little to be cheerful about. If Paul had counted his wounds instead of his blessings and opportunities which the Lord was holding up before him, he might not have derived much cheer from his heavenly visitor. If we are inclined

to look on the dark side, we can always find something depressing; but if we look for the bright side we can always be cheerful.

Bear witness also at Rome. Paul had purposed in his spirit to go to Rome. (Acts 19: 21.) He had written the Roman brethren of his desire. (Rom. 1: 13,14.) This message from the Lord not only relieved him of the fear of death, but granted him one of his most cherished desires in life. This was a worthy reward for the battle he had just fought.

Topics for Discussion

1. We must be able to distinguish between judgment and conscience, and must realize that one can have a clear conscience and still be the chief of sinners. If conscience is to be our guide in religion, there would be as many guides as there are people; it would be impossible that any certain person would have to do any one thing in order to be saved.

2. People ought to respect those who take the lead in God's service. If they are not worthy of respect, they should be removed from the office, and there is a way to do that.

But as long as they are in places of respect, we ought to respect them.

3. Appeal to religious prejudice is most effective. For his safety Paul appealed to the prejudice of the Pharisees against the Sadducees. Paul was on the side of truth, and his motive was good. But men often make this appeal for purely personal advantage, whether they are on the side of truth or not, and often divide the church of the Lord as effectively as Paul divided the council. Unsuspecting brethren often line up with these designing men and allow themselves to be used as their tools.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

How does Christianity help us in our dealing with our fellowman?

In what irreligious countries could one receive today such treatment as Paul received?

In what religious countries could one receive such treatment?

What would the practice of the Golden Rule cause us to do for people who are not free?

How would the cost of taking religious freedom compare with the cost of taking political freedom to these countries? Is it worth the cost?

Golden Text Explained

What persecutions had Paul suffered before going to Jerusalem?

By whom was Paul persecuted in Jerusalem?

Why did he have a right to think they might understand him and his motives?

What do you think was his state of mind when the Lord appeared to him?

What was the first source of comfort to Paul in this visit?

What did the presence of the Lord with Paul mean to him?

What was the second source of comfort in this visit?

Why was the assurance of a trip to Rome comforting to Paul?

Paul and the High Priest

Why would Paul look so steadfastly upon the council?

What statement did Paul make about his sincerity?

What is the conscience? What is its work?

Who was the high priest at this time and what is said of his character?

What did he command should be done to Paul and for what reason?

What did Paul say to the high priest?

What is the meaning of the term *whited wall*?

Did Paul's statement concerning the high priest prove true?

Why did Paul call the high priest a hypocrite?

What did Paul mean when he said he did not know he was speaking to the high priest?

Can his words be taken as an apology for speaking unguardedly?

Tell how Jesus acted in a similar situation.

The Council Divided

Who was the founder of the Sadducees? What is the date?

What is the meaning of the word Pharisee and what of their origin?
 What were the conditions of membership in the Pharisee party?
 What were the peculiar beliefs of these parties?
 With which did Paul hold more in common?
 Who among the Jews did Paul succeed in winning to his side?
 How far did they agree with Paul as to the visions he had seen?

Paul Rescued and Comforted
 Of what was the captain afraid concerning Paul?
 What did this incident prove with reference to the Jewish state of mind?
 What order did the captain give his soldiers?
 How did the Lord comfort Paul? What great desire was to be fulfilled?
 What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XI—June 11, 1950

PAUL BEFORE FELIX

The Lesson Text

Acts 24: 10-25

10 And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my defence:

11 Seeing that thou canst take knowledge that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Je-ru'-sa-lém:

12 And neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city.

13 Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets;

15 Having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.

16 Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always.

17 Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings:

18 Amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd,

nor yet with tumult: but *there were* certain Jews from A'-si-a—

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me.

20 Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they found when I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day.

22 But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lys'-i-as the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter.

23 And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.

24 But after certain days, Felix came with Dru-sil'-la, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Je'-sus.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*And as he reasoned of the judgment to come*” (Acts 24: 25a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 24: 1-9.

righteousness, and self-control, and

Daily Bible Readings

June 5. M.....The Righteous Shall Never be Moved (Psalm 15)
 June 6. T.....We Should Live Soberly and Righteously (Titus 2: 1-14)
 June 7. W.....Example of Righteous Living (Luke 1: 5-7)

- June 8. T..... Must Strive for Self-control (1 Cor. 9: 19-27)
 June 9. F..... Self-control a Christian Grace (2 Pet. 1: 1-11)
 June 10. S..... Judged According to Our Works (Rom. 2: 4-16)
 June 11. S..... At the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5: 1-11)

TIME.—A.D. 59.

PLACE.—Caesarea.

PERSONS.—Paul, Ananias, Tertullus, and Felix.

Introduction

In our last lesson we left Paul after he had been before the council, and when the Lord had appeared to him to comfort him. But while Paul was being comforted by the Lord, his enemies were plotting his death. They planned to ask the chief captain to bring Paul back before the council for further investigation, and they would surprise the soldiers in such force as to be sure to kill Paul. Forty of them bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. But Paul's nephew, just a young man, heard of their plotting, and brought to Paul this information. Paul sent him to the chief captain with this information. The captain immedi-

ately gathered 470 soldiers under two centurions to take Paul out of Jerusalem in the early part of the night. The foot-soldiers accompanied him only a short distance to Antipatris, but the cavalry took him on to Caesarea and delivered him to Felix, the governor. The chief captain also wrote a letter to Felix concerning Paul, in which he said from his examination of Paul he had found in him nothing worthy of death or of bonds. But since the governor could not take the captain's findings as final, but must conduct a trial himself, he placed Paul in Herod's palace, or Praetorium, the judgment hall with prison cells attached, where he was kept until the arrival of his accusers.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Righteousness.** Paul's reasoning on this subject was particularly fitting before this governor and his wife. The word righteousness means "Uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting." It is right dealing, especially as pertains to our fellowman. Piety or godliness has to do with our attitude toward God, but righteousness concerns our attitude toward man. Felix had not treated his fellowman right for he had murdered the high priest Jonathan by the hands of the Sicarii of whom mention has already been made. And he used a Cyprian sorcerer to help him seduce Drusilla, the beautiful wife of Azizus, king of Emesa, to leave her husband and marry him. This was clearly a violation of the law of righteousness. It is said also that he was unjust in his decisions as governor. We can believe this, for he thought he might get a bribe from Paul for his release. (Verse 26.)

Righteousness, or right dealing with our fellowman, should begin at home. Under this general heading would come proper treatment of husbands

and wives, and the kind and loving treatment of children in the home. Then beyond the circle of the home, righteousness would include our social relations. To tell the truth, to make no distinctions on account of wealth and educational advantages, and to help those who need our assistance. And it will reach into our business relations to cause us to refrain from dishonest and dishonorable dealings. It will cause the laborer to give an honest day's work, and it will cause the employer to pay a fair wage and provide good working conditions. If all would follow the teaching of Jesus as to righteousness, there would be no war between Capital and Labor. This principle also applies to judges on the bench as well as to the criminal at the bar.

2. **Self-control.** This word covers more ground than the word temperance as used in the King James version. It has been defined to mean "The virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites." The Greek word used is akin to the Greek word used in 1 Cor. 7: 9 and translated **con-**

tinency, or control of sexual desires. This was especially applicable to Felix and Drusilla. Felix used deceit and fraud to get her. Their marriage was based on lust instead of love. Felix knew nothing of controlling his desires. He used his governmental power to satisfy his desires. He made no attempt to control his desires; the only thing he knew or cared to do was to satisfy his desires regardless of the cost. Tacitus said of him, "Relying upon the influence of his brother at court, the infamous Pallas, this man acted as if he had a license to commit every crime with impunity."

The principle of self-control is applicable in all the affairs of life. Eating, drinking, and even working must be moderated with wisdom. In the use of money there is great need for self-control, that it may be spent wisely, and in such manner as will most honor God who gives us the health and opportunities to earn it. Since man is endowed with passion, necessary to propagating the race, there is need for rigid self-control lest we drift into sinful indulgence in unlawful relationships.

3. **Judgment to Come.** After having taught Felix what he should do

under the heading of righteousness, and having taught him to hold his inclinations and unholy desires in check, Paul now speaks of the judgment when the creature shall stand before his Creator to give account of the way he has lived. And since Felix had neither righteousness nor self-control, Paul could not paint a hopeful picture of the judgment to come to him. And under the weight of powerful reasons and a clear picture of the consequences of his unrighteous and intemperate life, Felix was made to realize his lost condition, and he trembled. How many of us would tremble if we were permitted to have a preview of the judgment?

There are some who think there will be no future judgment, no day of judgment at the end of the world; they think all the judgment there will ever be for a person is during this life. Paul clearly taught a *judgment to come*. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5: 10), and this judgment will be at his coming. (Matt. 25: 3 Iff.) In the final events John mentions the opening of books and the dead being judged out of the things written in the books according as their works had been. (Rev. 20: 11-15.)

Exposition of the Text

I. Paul's Defense (Acts 24: 10-21)

Thou hast been many years a judge. Felix was made governor in A.D. 52, and so had been in office six or seven years when Paul was brought before him. Paul's statement that he had been a judge for *many years* must be taken comparatively, as this was longer than a man usually held the office; and it was sufficient time for Felix to become well acquainted with the customs of the Jews. On this account Paul cheerfully made his defense. This introduction should be contrasted with that made by Tertullus, the lawyer, or "orator," which Ananias and the elders of the Jews brought with them.

Not more than twelve days. Paul made mention of the time he had been in Jerusalem to disprove the charge made against him as being "a mover of insurrection." (Verse 5.) It would hardly be possible for a man to start an insurrection in twelve

days, and Felix must know that Paul had not been free a part of those twelve days. It is rather difficult to account for those twelve days, and scholars have done it in various ways. But the best is that given by Hackett, Meyer and others. "First, the day of arrival in Jerusalem (21: 27); second, the interview with James (21: 18); third, the assumption of the vow (21: 26); fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh, the vow continued, which was to have been kept seven days (being interrupted on the fifth); eighth, Paul before the Sanhedrin (22: 30; 23: 1-10); ninth, the plot of the Jews and journey by night to Antipatris (23: 12, 31); tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth, the days at Caesarea (24: 1), on the last of which the trial was then taking place. The number of complete days, therefore, would be twelve; the day in progress at the time of the speaking not being counted."

Neither in the temple. Tertullus accused Paul of profaning the temple (verse 6), but Paul denied this, and further denied that he had disputed with any man, or stirred up a crowd in the city at all.

But this I confess unto thee. The mention of a confession would quicken the attention of the judge. Tertullus had accused Paul of being a "ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes," and Paul says he is willing to confess that after the Way they call a sect he worships God. When the Jews wished to use a term of reproach, they called the followers of Jesus Nazarenes. The term Christian, employing the word Christ, their Messiah, would not by them be used as a term of reproach.

The Way which they call a sect. The Way refers to the church, or that way which Jesus taught them to worship and serve God. This the Jews called a sect. From the Greek word here used we get our word *heresy*. But it refers more to the division, or sect, formed than to the doctrine which caused the division. It was after this Way that Paul worshipped God, the same God the Jews worshipped.

Believing all things. Tertullus had pictured Paul as a "pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrection," but Paul says he worships God, and believes all things written in the law of Moses, as well as those things written in the prophets accepted by the Jews as inspired. If the Jews wished to convict Paul, they should show wherein he has departed from the true teaching of the scriptures.

A resurrection both of just and unjust. Paul uses the resurrection to show that he holds the same views as a great portion of the Jews held, and since this was a cardinal doctrine with Paul, and it was one with which he had gained the sympathy of many Jews a few days before, he made use of it again.

A conscience void of offense toward God and men. Paul said he exercised himself to have a good conscience. A clear conscience is not easily had, it does not come by accident, nor by drifting along aimlessly through life. One must exercise himself, must put forth effort to have a clear conscience. He must know what is right,

and he must be determined to do what he knows to be right. Paul realized his dual relationship. Being God's creature, he was obligated to worship and serve God; and to have a good conscience towards God he must discharge his duties to God. And being associated with other people, he was obligated to humanity, and to have a good conscience towards all men he had to discharge his obligations to humanity. This he said he could not do without preaching the gospel to them. (Horn. 1: 14, 15.)

Bringing alms to my nation. Instead of being an evil influence among the people, Paul was actually engaged in gathering alms for the poor.

Found me purified in the temple. From Acts 21: 27 it is doubtful if Paul completed his ceremony of purification; but they found him in the process of being purified. This was sufficient to disprove their charge of profaning the temple. He denied there was any crowd or tumult connected with his worship in the temple. The only tumult connected with it was what the Jews caused when they dragged him out to kill him.

Let these men say what wrongdoing they found. Their accusations had been general. Let them be specific; let them name the wrong they saw me commit. When people say they dislike a man because of what he is in *general*, but cannot name something in *particular*, they have a mighty weak cause. The general is composed of a number of particulars. And when no particular can be named, it is proof that no particulars exist; and if no particulars exist, there is no general ground for dislike.

Except it be for this one voice. "For this one expression, or declaration." Some think that Paul here confesses he did wrong by bringing up the subject of the resurrection to divide the council in Jerusalem. (Acts 23: 6.) They make the sentence read, Let them prove some wrongdoing in me, except it be for this one thing that I cried standing among them about the resurrection. But this need not be taken as a confession of wrongdoing, but an effort to keep before them and Felix the main point of difference between them. Paul

said Jesus was raised from the dead, and that he appeared unto him to send him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; and this these Jews denied, and for it they hated him and wished to kill him. Paul closed his speech by putting the main point of difference before them.

II. Disposition of the Case (Acts 24: 22-25)

But Felix deferred them. Felix refused to render a judgment at that time. Luke says he had "more exact knowledge concerning the Way." The word *more* suggests a comparison, but Luke does not supply another member of the comparison. Scholars disagree widely on how the comparison is to be completed. It seems best to say that Felix had more exact knowledge, or knew better, than to render his decision at that time, so he deferred the matter.

When Lysias the chief captain shall come down. It was reasonable to defer the decision until he had talked with Lysias who had firsthand information about the riot at the time of Paul's arrest.

He should have indulgence. Felix undoubtedly knew that Paul was innocent. He could have had three reasons for deferring the decision. First, if he decided in Paul's favor and turned him loose, the Jews would have done all in their power to kill him. Keeping him in jail was the safest thing for Paul. Second, he could have kept Paul to favor the Jews. He could not grant their request to put him to death, but he could show them all the favor possible by detaining him. Third, he could have deferred his decision to give him time to get a bribe from Paul, as we know he attempted to do. (Verse 26.) Or his action could have been based on a combination of these reasons. Regardless of what his reason for deferring his decision, we can see the hand of God in it carrying out his promise to Paul that he should have the opportunity to go to Rome to preach the gospel.

Felix came with Drusilla, his wife. This Drusilla was of the Herod family, the daughter of Herod Agrippa I, and the sister of Herod Agrippa II and

Bernice, before whom Paul will next make his defense. (Acts 25: 23.) She was first betrothed to Antiochus Epiphanes, but because he refused to be circumcised and become a proselyte to Judaism, she refused to marry him. Felix consented to be circumcised to effect the union, when he took her from her lawful husband. She and one son by Felix perished in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79.

Who was a Jewess. The Herods were Idumaeans. "But though aliens by race, the Herods were Jews in faith. The Idumaeans had been conquered and brought over to Judaism by John Hyrcanus (130 B.C.); and from the time of their conversion they remained constant to their new religion, looking upon Jerusalem as their mother city and claiming for themselves the name of Jews. (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Heard him concerning the faith in Christ. This term simply means the gospel of Christ, the faith once for all revealed to the saints (Jude 3), the faith which should afterwards be revealed (Gal. 3: 23), the one faith of which Paul spoke. (Eph. 4: 5.) This gave Paul a wide range of subjects. He could take up the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah and then show that they had their fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. Or he could discourse on the person and work of Jesus as the Son of God and still be preaching the faith in Christ.

Righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come. When Paul reasoned on these matters of right living he was preaching the faith in Christ. Yes, these are doctrinal matters. We have allowed the religious world to characterize as *doctrines* those issues on which we are divided, including baptism and the Lord's supper, but Paul lists a lot of very practical matters under the heading of "sound doctrine." (Titus 2: 1-10.)

Go thy way for this time. Being terrified by the lesson and his lost condition, Felix, not having the courage to repent, dismissed Paul. But getting rid of the preacher will not better the situation; it was only

temporary and partial relief which eventually brought on more and greater suffering.

When I have a convenient season.

A convenient season is one when it

will be as easy to do a thing as not to do it. That time will never come for obeying the gospel; it will always mean sacrifice and self-denial to become a Christian.

Topics for Discussion

1. The fires of prejudice lead people to hate, lie, and murder those who believe and preach the things against which we are prejudiced. We ought to work and pray to be delivered from the driving influence of religious prejudice.

2. Paul said he believed "all things which are according to the law." It is not enough to believe some things and reject others. The modernist says he believes some things said about Jesus Christ, but the sad thing is that he does not believe all things. And some of those things which he refuses to believe are of vital importance, such as the virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus.

3. It should be noticed that, though Felix trembled, Drusilla was not affected by the preaching of Paul to a degree worthy of mention. Felix was new in the belief in God even from the Jewish point of view in which he was none to well instructed. He had heard nothing of such a judgment in his heathen religion. When Paul presented the doctrine of final judgment according to our works, he trembled. But Drusilla had always believed in God and had been taught that God takes account of our deeds; she had sinned against that light so long that Paul's preaching did not affect her; she had built up a resistance to such teaching.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Tell of the plot of the Jews to kill Paul.

Who was instrumental in saving Paul from this plot?

How many soldiers were used in delivering him to Felix?

Where was Paul kept until time for his trial?

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of righteousness as used here?

What evidence do we have that Felix was unrighteous?

Where should righteousness begin with us?

Illustrate how we should be righteous in our social relations.

What would be the effect of righteousness in the business world?

What is the meaning of self-control?

What proof do we have that Felix needed this lesson?

Discuss self-control with reference to the daily affairs of life.

What was the third point in Paul's sermon?

Why did Felix have reason to tremble at the thought of judgment?

On what do we base our belief of a future judgment?

Paul's Defense

How long had Felix been governor in Judaea?

Can you account for the twelve days Paul mentions that he had been in Judaea?

What did the Jews accuse Paul of doing to the temple?

What confession did Paul make in his speech?

What was the term of reproach used by the Jews to apply to Christians?

In what did Paul declare his belief?

Does Paul encourage the idea of more than one resurrection?

What is necessary in order that one may have a good conscience?

How can one have a good conscience towards God? And towards men?

For what purpose did Paul say he had come to Jerusalem?

Why was Paul in the temple when the Jews found him?

Explain why one cannot be condemned on general principles without being guilty of something in particular.

What one thing did Paul emphasize in the close of his defense?

Disposition of the Case

Why did Felix defer his decision of Paul's case?

For whom did Felix say he would wait before rendering his decision?

How did Felix show his friendliness to Paul?

What do you know of Drusilla? To what extent was she a Jewess?

What is meant by the faith in Christ which Felix heard from Paul?

What impression did Paul make on Felix? Why did he not become a Christian?

What is a convenient season? Why will it never come?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XII—June 18, 1950

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

The Lesson Text

Acts 26: 1-3, 19-29

1 And A-grip'-pa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence:

2 I think myself happy, king A-grip'-pa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews:

3 Especially because thou art expert in a-1 customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

19 Wherefore, O king A-grip'-pa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But declared both to them of Da-mas'-cus first, and at Je-ru'-sa-lem, and throughout all the country of Ju-dae'-a, and also to the Gen'-tiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.

21 For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and

great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Mó-ses did say should come;

23 How that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the 0en'-tiles.

24 And as he thus made his defence, Fes'-tus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad.

25 But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Fes'-tus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner.

27 King A-grip'-pa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 And A-grip'-pa *said* unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Chris'-tian.

29 And Paul *said*, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men"* (2 Cor. 5: 11a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 26: 4-18.

Daily Bible Readings

June 12.	M. Jehovah My Light and Strength (Psalm 27: 1-6)
June 13.	T. The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom (Job 28: 23-28)
June 14. W.....	Men Hide from Terror of Jehovah (Isa. 2: 9-22)
June 15. T.....	Punishment Due to Sinners (Mark 9: 38-50)
June 16.	F. Eternal Destruction from God (2 Thess. 1: 3-12)
June 17. S.....	Vengeance Belongs to God (Heb. 10: 26-31)
June 18. S.....	Destruction of the Ungodly (2 Pet. 3: 1-13)

TIME.—A.D. 59 or 60.

PLACE.—Caesarea.

PERSONS.—Paul, Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice.

Introduction

Though Felix heard Paul often concerning the faith in Christ, he never became a believer. His primary object was to get a bribe from Paul

for his release. After two years of imprisonment under Felix, Paul was left in the hands of another governor. Felix was accused by the Jews of

Caesarea, and would have been punished severely had his brother Pallas not had sufficient influence with Nero to save him from it. (Josephus.) Hence we see why Felix left Paul in prison in an effort to gain the favor of the Jews. (Acts 24: 27.)

Festus had been in his province only three days when he went up to Jerusalem for a visit. The Jews lost no time accusing Paul, and asking Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem for trial. But Festus replied that they should come to Caesarea if they wished to prosecute Paul. Immediately the Jews went "bringing against him many and grievous charges which they could not prove." They also formed another plan to request another trial at Jerusalem and to murder Paul on his way to the city. And since Festus was a new governor, he was anxious to gain the favor of the Jews too, so he asked Paul if he was willing to go back to Jerusalem for another trial. Paul replied that he was willing to die if he had done anything worthy of death, but since they could not prove their charge, he refused to be delivered into their hands. And to prevent being

delivered to the Jews, Paul appealed unto Caesar. Formerly it was the right of a Roman citizen to appeal his case to the *people* for a public hearing, but this gradually changed to an appeal to a trial before the emperor. This was the right of a Roman citizen only. And it meant that he would be given free and safe transportation from the place of the appeal to Rome. And when the appeal was made the case was out of the hands of the governor; he had no right to deny the appeal.

While preparations were being made to send Paul to Rome, Agrippa who was king of Chalcis, Trachonitis, Perea, and part of Galilee, came to visit Festus. Agrippa was anxious to hear Paul, and since it provided one day of entertainment, Festus was glad to accommodate him. Bernice was the sister of Agrippa. She had been married two or three times, once to her own uncle, but returned to live with her brother. "Josephus directly charges her with incest with her brother Agrippa," and several writers such "as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Juvenal either mention her expressly or allude to her" as being an ungodly woman.

Golden Text Explained

1. The Fear of the Lord. The King James version has the "terror of the Lord." "The rendering, 'the terror of the Lord,' for the everyday expression, 'the fear of the Lord,' was wantonly intruded into modern versions by Beza, and has not a single word to be said in its favor. The phrase means (as always) not the dread which God inspires, but the holy fear which mingles with our love of him." (Pulpit Commentary.) Efforts have been made to take from this and other passages the idea of punishment, but if that be done there remains little reason why we should persuade men. Paul had just said we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account of our deeds whether good or bad. And this statement must be taken as a warning against wrongdoing and a persuasion to a life acceptable to the Lord. Why should we fear the Lord? We as Christians have no reason to fear him, so long as we do what he commands us. Paul is per-

suading men who are not Christians to become such in view of the fact that they shall suffer punishment for their sins. It is only when Christians give way to temptation to sin that they have cause to fear the Lord in this sense. Men should fear God (1) because of his hatred for sin. God banished angels from heaven when they sinned (Jude 6), and has destroyed cities and nations for their wickedness (2 Pet. 2: 6), and sent his Son to die that we might be saved from sin, as proof of his hatred for sin. (2) Because the Lord has the power to punish forever in such manner as sin deserves. The God that can bring this universe into being has power to do anything. If sin is so terrible as to make necessary the death of the sinless Son of God to atone for it, sin deserves punishment beyond our power to imagine. (3) We should fear God because he has given his word, which cannot fail, that he will cast unrepentant sinners

into the same place he will send Satan. (Rev. 20: 10, 14, 15.)

2. **We Persuade Men.** Paul did not persuade men in the sense of seeking their favor rather than the favor of God. (Gal. 1: 10.) But he persuaded men to repent, to turn to God for salvation from their sins. It should be noticed that Paul did not say we force men to turn to God. That the wicked will be punished is true, but we are not to use that to build up in the minds of people the feeling that God is seeking to destroy them. Nor should we use it to scare people into going through the form of obeying the gospel without ceasing to love sin. But the fear, the reverential awe, of God on account of his attitude towards sin is a firm basis on which to build our appeal to men to turn to God for salvation from sin. If God hates sin enough to give his Son to atone for our mistakes, this

is sufficient proof that he does not seek to destroy us, but the sin which is in us. So we tell people of the goodness of God towards men, and of his severity towards the sins of which they are guilty. (Rom. 11: 22.) With this as a basis we appeal to them, we persuade them to turn away from a life of sin to a life of holiness in Christ. To do this work effectively we must (1) love the Lord and be interested in honoring his name; (2) we must love people and be interested in saving them from the punishment their sins deserve; (3) we must be willing to make sacrifices of time, effort, and money, even of friendships and family relations to do this work. Paul was willing to be anathema from Christ to save his Jewish brethren. (Rom. 9: 1-4.) (4) Attention must be given to develop proper attitude, approach, tone of voice to appeal instead of repel.

Exposition of the Text

I. Gaining Agrippa's Attention (Acts 26: 1-3)

Thou art permitted to speak. Being the guest of honor, and a king, Agrippa was by the courtesy of Festus allowed to preside at this meeting. Paul was not now on trial for his life, because Agrippa had no jurisdiction over him, and Paul had taken his case out of the hands even of Festus and appealed to Nero. The purpose of his speaking at this time is well stated in these words, "(1) To vindicate his character, and obtain Agrippa's attestation to his innocence, that he might allay the anger of the Jews; (2) to obtain a correct representation of the case to the emperor ... (3) To defend his own conversion, and the truth of Christianity, and to preach the gospel in the hearing of Agrippa and the attendants, with a hope that their minds might be improved by the truth, and that they might be converted to God." (Barnes.)

I think myself happy. Again we see the courtesy of Paul, and yet his utter sincerity in addressing nobility. There is no flattery, yet there is kindness and the proper respect one should have for rulers, and the complete absence of recrimination and bitterness for his unjust treatment for more than two years.

Whereof I am accused of the Jews.

The accusations of the Jews were many, but may be summed up in three heads, (1) being a pestilent fellow who started insurrections; (2) a world-wide ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; and (3) one who profaned the temple, and taught against the ceremonies of the law. He does not take up these matters in any regular order to answer them as he would have done if he had been in a regular trial.

Thou art expert in all customs and questions. Herod Agrippa II had a background which the governors, Felix and Festus, did not have, and so was capable of understanding Paul's situation much better than they. "The Rabbinic writers speak of Agrippa as having excelled in a knowledge of the law. As the tradition which they follow could not have flowed from this passage, it confirms the representation here by an unexpected agreement." (Hackett.) The word *expert* means literally *a knower*. The Gnostics took their name from this word.

Hear me patiently. Since Agrippa had unusual knowledge of Jewish customs and questions, Paul was happy to speak before him. And his request for patient hearing suggested

that Paul intended to take more than usual time to lay his case before him.

II. Paul Justifies His Course (Acts 26: 19-23)

I was not disobedient. We have skipped verses 4 through 18 which should be read. In these verses Paul relates his early manner of life, affirms his sincerity, tells how he once persecuted the church, recounts his conversion on the way to Damascus, and tells why he had gone far and wide to preach the gospel. His work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles was in response to the command of the Lord given him in that vision. So he says he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Agrippa had some knowledge of prophets of old being sent by the Lord on various missions. He knew how important it was to obey such commands.

To *them at Damascus first.* Paul conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal. 1: 16) about preaching. He did not wait for a conference or Pope to ordain him. He preached the gospel to people with whom he intended to work persecuting Christians. But since he did not do what he came to Damascus to do, the Jews gained the help of the governor and would have taken him prisoner, but the brethren helped him escape. (2 Cor. 11: 32, 33.)

And at Jerusalem. When Paul escaped from Damascus, he spent three years in Arabia, then returned to Damascus for a while, and then on to Jerusalem. (Gal. 1: 17, 18.) When he came to Jerusalem the brethren were afraid of him, but Barnabas told them of his conversion and of his preaching in Damascus. (Acts 9: 26-30.) However, the Lord told him to leave Jerusalem because his testimony would not be received there. (Acts 22: 17, 18.)

All the country of Judaea. When this preaching was done is not easy to determine. It was not done following his preaching at Jerusalem mentioned above, for he says he went to Syria and Cilicia, and was unknown by face to the churches of Judaea. (Gal. 1: 21, 22.) But Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem with alms and they may have preached to churches on the way. (Acts 11: 29, 30.) Again, when Paul

went to Jerusalem for the conference with the apostles and elders it is said they "declared the conversion of the Gentiles" to brethren on their journey. (Acts 15: 3.) And when Paul finished his second missionary journey he landed at Caesarea and "went up and saluted the church" before he went to Antioch. (Acts 12: 22.) This means the church at Jerusalem and not at Caesarea. So Paul had ample reason for saying he had preached in all the country of Judaea.

Also to the Gentiles. The Lord said he would send him to the Gentiles. (Acts 22: 21.) He was an apostle to the Gentiles. (Gal. 2: 8, 9; Rom. 15: 16.)

Repent and turn to God. Since repentance refers to a change of mind with reference to sin, the words *turn to God* must refer to something else. We have the same expression in Acts 3: 19, where the turning to God is said to be in order that our sins may be blotted out. In Acts 2: 38 we are told to repent and be baptized in order that we may be forgiven. Hence we conclude that the words *turn to God* in our text means to be baptized into Christ following our repentance. And following our baptism into Christ, we are to prove our sincerity and the genuineness of our conversion by doing works worthy of repentance.

Having obtained help from God. For doing what he had just related the Jews seized him in the temple. This is a denial of the charge that they seized him because he was a mover of insurrection and a profaner of the temple. Through the help of God Paul had stood, and was standing at that time, for only those things written in the law of Moses, and in the writings of the prophets. He was not a despiser of the law and the prophets; his work was not in opposition to, but in fulfillment of, the law and the prophets.

That the Christ must suffer. Did Agrippa know the prophecies well enough to believe the Messiah was to be a sufferer as well as a conquerer? Perhaps that was too much to expect, but being the truth, Paul included it and stressed the fact that through his resurrection light was proclaimed both to Jews and Gentiles. No distinction was made by Paul as

he preached to great and small, the rich and poor, of all races.

III. Effect of Paul's Speech (Acts 26: 24-29)

Paul, *thou art mad*. Like the men of Athens who heard Paul until he mentioned the resurrection, Festus listened until Paul declared that Christ was raised from the dead. No doubt the mention of his appearance in the vision was more than Festus could believe, but this added to all the rest made Festus think Paul was mad, or mentally deranged. Festus thought much learning, too close application of his mind to these matters, had caused Paul to become deranged.

I am not mad, most excellent Festus. Paul's reply is a model of Christian courtesy. "If great and good men who meet with rude and insolent treatment in the defense of the gospel would learn to behave with such moderation, it would be a great accession of strength to the Christian cause." (Doddridge.)

The king knoweth of these things. Festus had not been in the country long, and had not had the opportunity to know as much about these matters as Agrippa, so Paul appeals again to his wider knowledge and begs for his attention and careful consideration. These things had not been done in a corner, or secretly; they were matters of common knowledge to all who observed what was going on about them.

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? The prophets taught that these things should be. It was not madness to believe the prophets. And Paul appealed to Agrippa as one who believed the prophets. Would Festus think Agrippa mad for believing the prophets? Not waiting for Agrippa to answer a prisoner, Paul said he knew that Agrippa believed. Though he might not know that the prophets taught a certain thing, yet Agrippa, being brought up in the Jewish faith, acknowledged the inspiration of the prophets and so was committed to the belief of all they taught. And since Paul had proved that Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies, this was equal to an appeal to him to accept Jesus as his Messiah and Saviour. Paul was

not ashamed of a crucified Saviour; he would offer him to governors and kings.

With but little persuasion. It is difficult, maybe impossible, to know whether Agrippa said what we have in our text, or "Almost thou persuadedest me to be a Christian." How was Agrippa affected by the speech? If he was seriously impressed; if, like Felix, he trembled at what he heard, we may safely conclude that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. But if he was not so impressed, and wished to dismiss the matter, it is reasonable to think he turned it off by asking Paul if he thought he could convert him with one short sermon. Notice that the term *Christian* was known to Agrippa, so must have been in common use. And though Agrippa was a Jew in faith, and the Jews accused Paul of being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, still Agrippa uses the respectful title of Christian. Sin had spun its web too strongly and securely around Agrippa for him to be able to break through. We should be warned by the fact that those who live long in sin rarely ever break away. Young people should turn to God in early life and form their characters after Christ, so they will not face the necessity of breaking away from sin and reforming characters late in life.

Become such as I am. This was Paul's prayer for Agrippa and all others in sin, whether by little or much persuasion. Paul was willing to do little or much to save all. (Rom. 9: 3.) He said he endured all things that they might obtain salvation. (2 Tim. 2: 10.)

Except these bonds. Paul wanted Agrippa to enjoy the blessings of Christianity, but he did not wish for him the persecutions attending the profession of Christianity. Lifting his hand and rattling his chain, and expressing the wish that the ruler would never experience it, was a manifestation of the Christian spirit, and calculated to gain the favor of the ruler. The sincerity of the statement no doubt was obvious, and the king went away saying that, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds."

Topics for Discussion

1. At the close of life Paul was abundantly able to say what all will wish they could say truthfully, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Obedience does not atone for sins, but the blood of Christ atones for our sins on conditions we obey the Lord.

2. Someone has said that Christ is concealed in the law and prophets, but revealed in the gospel; in this way he is the center of the teaching

of the whole Bible. Take Christ out of the Bible and it will be worthless. If we take Christ out of art, or literature, or law, we would have little of lasting value left.

3. The world has always thought Christians mad; and the more zealous Christians are, the more deranged the world thinks they are. Those who court the approval of the world will find it embarrassing to be faithful and zealous in work and worship.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

How long was Paul held in prison by Felix?

Why did Felix leave Paul in prison?

Why did Felix need to court the favor of the Jews?

How long had Festus been in office before the Jews told him of Paul?

How did Festus show his willingness to favor the Jews?

What appeal did Paul then make? What did it mean to him?

What do you know of Agrippa and Bernice?

Golden Text Explained

What is meant by the fear of the Lord?

Give and discuss three reasons for fearing God.

In what sense did Paul not persuade men?

What is the proper use of the doctrine of punishment for sin?

Name and discuss four requisites for effective work in persuading people to turn to God.

Gaining Agrippa's Attention

What three things did Paul wish to gain by speaking to Agrippa?

How did he show courtesy to Agrippa?

What were the accusations of the Jews against Paul?

Why was Agrippa more of an expert in Jewish matters than Festus or Felix?

What request did Paul make of Agrippa?

Paul Justifies His Course

What thoughts are presented by Paul in the part of the speech not in our text?

To what was Paul not disobedient?

Where did Paul do his first preaching?

How was he received there? How did he get away?

How long before Paul returned to Jerusalem? How was he received there?

Did Paul preach in Judaea immediately after his conversion?

On what occasions did he have opportunity to preach in Judaea?

What was Paul's peculiar relation to the Gentiles?

What is the meaning of repentance?

What is meant by turning to God as used in this text?

To what does Paul attribute his ability to stand for the Lord as he did?

Of what did Paul's preaching consist?

Where did he get his material?

What did the Old Testament say with reference to Christ?

Effect of Paul's Speech

What did Festus think of Paul?

Of what did Paul make mention that caused Festus to think he was deranged?

What can you say for Paul's reply to Festus?

How did Paul compliment the king for his knowledge of these matters?

What direct question did Paul ask Agrippa? What was implied in it?

Discuss Agrippa's answer; do you believe he considered obeying the gospel?

How much did Paul desire the salvation of Agrippa? And all others?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XIII—June 25, 1950

PAUL A PRISONER IN ROME

The Lesson Text

Acts 28: 16-24, 30, 31

16 And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those

that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet

was delivered prisoner from Je-ru'-sa-lem into the hands of the Romans:

18 Who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cae'-sar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation.

20 For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with *me*: for because of the hope of is'-ra-el I am bound with this chain.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judae'-a concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning

this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter*, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Je'-sus, both from the law of Mo'-ses and from the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken and some disbelieved.

30 And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Je'-sus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

Golden Text.—“*So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome*” (Rom. 1: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 28: 25-28.

Daily Bible Readings

June 19. M.....They Shall All be Taught of God (John 6: 41-51)
 June 20. T.....Preach the Gospel to Every Creature (Mark 16: 14-20)
 June 21. W.....Faith Comes by Hearing the Word (Rom. 10: 11-21)
 June 22. T.....Danger of Perverting the Gospel (Gal. 1: 6-17)
 June 23. F.....Made Known for Obedience of Faith (Rom. 16: 25-27)
 June 24. S.....That We May Know the Purpose of God (Eph. 3: 1-13)
 June 25. S.....How Men Are to Receive the Gospel (1 Thess. 2: 13-20)

TIME.—A.D. 61.

PLACE.—Rome.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Roman brethren.

Introduction

Some time was consumed, after Paul had appealed to Caesar, making arrangements and securing passage for him and other prisoners being sent to Rome. It was during this time of waiting that Paul made his defense before Agrippa. Paul was delivered into the hands of a centurion of the Augustan band, who proved to be kindly disposed to him. Most of the centurions of which we read in the New Testament were good men. If the governors of Judaea had been as just and kind as the centurions, Christians would have been spared much suffering. (Matt. 8: 5; Luke 23: 47; Acts 10: 1.) Luke accompanied Paul on his journey to Rome, as is indicated by the pronoun “we” in the account which he wrote. And we are told that Aristarchus, a Mace-

donian of Thessalonica was with them. (Acts 27: 2.) The ship sailed north from Caesarea to Sidon, then passed by Cyprus and touched Myra on the mainland of Asia Minor, where they changed ships. Then they sailed for the island of Crete, where they should have spent the winter in the harbor of Fair Havens. And when Paul saw they were making preparations to sail, he admonished them that if they did not stay their voyage would be a perilous one. But they gave no heed to his advice and were soon in a storm which caused them finally to be wrecked, but without the loss of life. They landed on the island of Melita, now called Malta, where they spent three months. From there they went to Rome without incident. The Christians of Rome had heard of

his coming, so they went as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns, a distance of 56 miles, to meet him. Paul had long wished he could go to Home. The Lord promised him he would go, but had Paul been left to choose his manner of going no doubt it would have been different. "No car of victory carried him; he trod the causewayed road

with wayworn feet. No medals or ornaments adorned his person, a chain of iron dangled from his wrist. No applauding crowds welcomed his approach, a few humble friends formed all his escort, yet never did a more truly conquering footstep fall on the pavement of Home, or a heart more confident of victory pass beneath her gates." (Stalker.)

Golden Text Explained

1. The Payment of a Debt. Our Golden Text is the conclusion of this statement, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." Paul realized that he was a debtor, not because the Greeks or the Barbarians had done anything for him; but his Lord had done much for him. And since the Lord does not need anything, cannot be served by men's hands, there was nothing Paul could do for him in the way of paying him for his blessings. But by serving others, he could show his appreciation for what the Lord had done for him. And in bringing others to a knowledge of the Lord he not only brought them a great blessing, but he honored and glorified God. And by bringing the lost back to God he caused much rejoicing in heaven. (Luke 15.) If all of us could feel this obligation keenly, we would do more to save the lost. It is dishonorable to refuse to pay one's debts. By saving others we discharge our obligations to God and humanity. Hence it is dishonorable to refuse to do what we can to save others.

2. As Much As In Me Is. To the limit of my ability. Paul was ready to do all he could. Of him as was said of the sacrificing woman, he has done what he could. The one talent man was not willing to do what he could. He was able to handle the money his master gave him, for the talents were distributed according to their individual ability. (Matt. 25: 14ff.) But he refused to accept responsibility because of the dangers involved. How often we refuse to teach and warn others because of the danger of losing a friend, or because we do not wish to be exposed to criticism, or because we are afraid we will make a failure and suffer ridicule. Paul had great ability. He

could have been a great success in many fields of activity, and enjoyed the applause of the world. But he chose to give his talents to the church. Young people with unusual ability often think the church is not a proper place for the use of great talents. Parents seldom encourage their children to plan to use their ability in the church. Paul felt that he was obligated to do so, and set for us a wonderful example of using his ability to its full extent in the church for the glory of the Lord.

3. I Am Ready. These are words of confidence. Paul was not boasting, but he was confident of his readiness. He had been taught by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1: 5); he had applied himself well under his teachers, even the great Gamaliel; and he had used his books and parchments well. (2 Tim. 4: 13.) He had received his gospel message from the Lord. (Gal. 1: 11, 12.) So he was prepared in mind; he had the material for preaching the gospel to Rome, the great capital of the world. But it is not enough to be prepared in mind, to have the material which must be preached. There is a preparation of the heart which is very essential. Paul said if he spoke with the tongues of men and of angels, but had not love he was as sounding brass. (1 Cor. 13: 1.) There must be love for God, love of the truth, and love for lost souls in the heart before one is ready to preach the gospel. And, last, there is the preparation of separation or consecration to the work. It will cost something in time, effort, and self-denial to preach the gospel. Is one willing to pay the price? Men must divorce themselves from the world; they must make up their minds they will not enjoy the things of this world, even

to the extent many church members enjoy them, if they serve as examples to others, and if they keep themselves in position to reprove worldliness in others. Paul had separated himself from the world so far that

he felt he was ready to preach the gospel effectively in any place. Young men who desire to preach the gospel must be told the price, and encouraged to pay the price of effective preaching.

Exposition of the Text

I. Meets Jewish Leaders (Acts 28: 16-22)

Paul was suffered to abide himself. When the prisoners were night to Rome, the duties of the centurion in charge ended. They were received by the Praetorian guard, and the captain of this cohort would decide where prisoners were to be placed. Since Paul was shown unusual courtesy from the start, we may safely conclude that the centurion told the captain of the guard about Paul. By the time the centurion got to Rome he had seen and heard enough from Paul to realize that he was innocent of the charges against him, and that he was a man of God. Whether Paul was in his own hired house from the first, we do not know; some have suggested that his first meeting with the Jews was in the house of one of the brethren who met Paul.

The soldier that guarded him. It was customary for the left arm of the soldier and the right arm of the prisoner to be chained together. Soldiers guarded in eight hour shifts, and some say that a soldier did not guard Paul a second time until all the soldiers in the Praetorian guard had guarded him once. If this be true, Paul was given a new audience every eight hours until he had opportunity to preach the gospel to every soldier in the imperial guard. He would be tactful, but we may be sure he would not lose an opportunity to use his influence for the glory of God and the salvation of the lost.

He called together the chief of the Jews. Paul lost no time in setting before the Jews his situation. He had been in Rome only three days before he had this meeting. This gave him only one full day of rest. The chief of the Jews would be the rulers of the synagogues and the Scribes. It is said there were as many as seven synagogues in Rome at this time. Though Claudius had banished all Jews from Rome some years before (Acts 18: 2), they had been allowed

to return. It would seem that Paul had suffered enough from the Jews, and that he would be slow to stir them up in Rome by getting in touch with them. But his love for his people, and for the lost generally, would not let him rest until he had told them of Jesus and the salvation which is offered through him.

I had done nothing against my people. Paul told these Jews of the charges made against him in Judaea, but assured them that he had done nothing against his people, or against the customs of their fathers. This, of course, depended on one's point of view. From the Jewish point of view, Paul was destroying the customs, for certainly he taught that these customs were no longer essential, no longer a part of our duty to God. From Paul's point of view these things had passed away with the law of Moses, and they should now go on to perfection in Christ.

Was delivered into the hands of the Romans. This refers to his imprisonment in Caesarea. This was a tactful way of putting the matter. He was taken in protective custody by the Romans. But Paul did not wish to say any more about his unjust treatment than was necessary.

Desired to set me at liberty. Whether Felix was inclined to set Paul free we do not know, but Festus conceded his innocence (Acts 25: 17-19), and Agrippa said he might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar. (Acts 26: 32.)

When the Jews spake against it. If the rulers were willing to free him, there had to be some reason stated for his imprisonment in Rome. So Paul said the people spoke against his being set free, and he appealed to Caesar. Yet he does not tell them that the Jews planned to murder him; he shields them as much as is consistent with truth. He wished them to know that he was not there with any accusation against his nation.

For the hope of Israel I am bound. The hope of Israel included two things. (1) They expected a Messiah who would establish a kingdom. Of this they had unscriptural ideas which caused them to reject it when it came. (2) They entertained the hope of a resurrection and eternal life. (Acts 24: 15.) If the Jews entertained these hopes and were not bound, why was Paul bound for the same hope? He believed and preached that their hopes were fulfilled in Jesus. Paul preached that Jesus was their Messiah, and the church the kingdom they expected. He preached that, though they had crucified Jesus, God had raised him from the dead as proof of his divinity (Rom. 1: 4), and the pledge of their final resurrection. (1 Cor. 15: 20.) A crucified Saviour was repulsive to them (1 Cor. 1: 23), so they rejected him, and persecuted Paul for preaching him.

Neither received letters, nor did any brethren come. Paul must have wondered why these Jews in Rome had not received word of his coming. His three months' stop on his way (verse 11) gave them plenty of time to get word there before he arrived, unless the stormy winter season prevented travel by sea for that length of time.

But we desire to hear thee. Though they had not received word about Paul's trouble with the Jews of Judaea, they had heard about his preaching, and about the sect to which he belonged. It seems they had heard nothing good about what they called a sect. It was spoken against everywhere and by everybody who had talked with them. These Jews did not mention the church in Rome. Did they know of the church? Had they heard the gospel preached in Rome? Their recent banishment from Rome, and their continued insecurity there, together with the favored position of Paul with the Roman authorities, led them to be cautious in their remarks. They do not deny personal knowledge of the church, nor do they affirm their belief in the reports they admit hearing.

II. Preaching to Great Numbers

(Acts 28: 23, 24)

Had appointed him a day. The Jews set the time for their next meeting. They had a desire to hear him,

so likely Paul suggested that they set the date when it would be most convenient for them, and when they could get the greatest hearing for him.

Into his lodging. The difference between this expression and that of verse 30 where it is said he was in his own hired dwelling, and the fact that he speaks of Philemon preparing him a lodging (Phile. 22), cause scholars to think this *lodging* was a place prepared for him by hospitable brethren until he could get a place of his own.

Testifying the kingdom of God. Paul spoke of the prophecies concerning the kingdom (Isa. 2: 1-4; Dan. 2: 44; Psalm 104), and then told of the establishment of the kingdom on Pentecost when Jesus, having ascended a few days before, was made both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2: 36.) Paul was not among that number who thought Jesus came to establish the kingdom, but changed his mind on account of the opposition of the Jews, and built the church to serve until such time as he could establish the kingdom and set up his throne in Jerusalem and reign personally on earth. Paul said we have received the kingdom (Heb. 12: 28), that we have been translated into the kingdom (Col. 1: 13), and believed with John that we are partakers of the benefits of the kingdom. (Rev. 1: 9.)

From the law of Moses and the prophets. The fact that Paul was acquainted with the Old Testament scriptures enabled him to use the passages on which the Jews relied to prove the coming of a Messiah, and the establishment of a kingdom. And his knowledge of the gospel made it possible for him to show that the prophecies of the Old Testament had been fulfilled in Jesus and the church. This is still necessary procedure when dealing with Jews.

From morning till evening. They had sufficient interest to listen more than thirty minutes. People are demanding shorter and ever shorter sermons. People who will sit in a show for hours will complain if they are held longer than one hour for worship. This does not speak well for their interest in spiritual matters.

Some believed, some disbelieved. The tense of these verbs is the imperfect, not aorist which would have indicated completed action. They were in the act of believing and disbelieving. Those inclined to believe would return for more teaching, but those inclined to disbelieve would be hardened in their unbelief. In the hope of rescuing some of them Paul quoted a prophecy from Isaiah about people stopping their ears, shutting their eyes, and hardening their hearts lest they should turn to the Lord and be saved.

III. Paul's Stay in Rome (Acts 28:

30, 31)

Two whole years in his hired dwelling. Whether this was while he waited for his trial before Nero, or was the term of his sentence is not known. There are some who claim that Nero heard him soon after his arrival, that he refused to free Paul, but showed him the courtesy of living in his own hired house while chained to a soldier. From available records the matter can never be determined.

Received all that went in. There were no restrictions on Paul as to whom, or how many people, he could see at any time. Paul took advantage of the situation, and improved his

opportunities to the fullest extent possible. And it was his judgment that his imprisonment had "fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel" than to the hindrance of it. (Phil. 1: 12ff.) We are often discouraged when things do not go like we think they should, and, being discouraged, we make little effort to use what opportunities we have. But when Paul did not get what he wished, he used to the best of his ability what he got. He had learned to be content in whatever state he was in. (Phil. 4: 11.) This made it possible for him to use his limited opportunities to the best advantage.

Preaching and teaching with all boldness. The word *preaching* includes the announcement of salvation on the terms and conditions fixed; the word *teaching* includes argument, illustration, and any other method necessary to impart instruction effectively. Paul wished to be bold in the presentation of the gospel, and asked people to pray that he might. (Eph. 6: 19.) Paul seems to have been released, for he speaks of his "first defense" (2 Tim. 4: 16), but was later arrested and imprisoned again. He is supposed to have been beheaded and buried on the Ostian Way just outside Rome sometime after the burning of Rome.

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul prayed, and asked the Roman brethren to pray with him, that he might get to go to Rome. (Rom. 15: 30-32.) His prayer was answered. This is an example for us to pray to God about the things we wish to do. Pray for wisdom to do the right. Pray that God's will be done, and then learn to be content with the outcome.

2. Paul's unceasing love for his brethren is the greatest demonstration of love we know anything about except the love of God for man. If he

ever allowed their hatred and persecution to cause him to love them less, we have no record of it.

3. A summary of the characteristics of Paul would be impossible in our limited space, but his faith, zeal, perseverance, love for his brethren, loyalty to the Lord, his uncompromising stand for the truth, his willingness to make sacrifices to preach the gospel to the lost where it had never been preached, and his purity of life, as well as others, are all outstanding, and make of him one of the greatest men who ever lived.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

In whose custody was Paul placed for his voyage to Rome?

What do you know of centurions mentioned in the New Testament?

How do they compare with the governors mentioned?

What two companions went to Rome with Paul?

Trace the course of Paul from Caesarea to Rome.

What encouragement did Paul receive from brethren in Rome?

Golden Text Explained

What did Paul say of his relation to Greeks and Barbarians?

How did he propose to pay his debt?

What of those who refuse to pay either financial or moral debts?

What is the measure of our responsibility to God?

Where should great or small talents be used to give greatest glory to God?

What contributed to Paul's readiness to preach?

What is the first preparation necessary to preaching?

What is included in the preparation of the heart?

What is meant by separation and consecration to the work of preaching?

Meets Jewish Leaders

In whose custody was Paul placed? How do you account for his kindly treatment of Paul?

How was Paul guarded in a private home?

How soon did Paul call for a meeting of the Jews?

How does this show his unceasing love for the Jews?

In what sense had Paul done nothing against Jewish customs?

What did Paul say of the attitude of the rulers toward him?

What is meant by the hope of Israel? Why was Paul bound for that hope?

What did the Homan Jews know of Paul?

What reputation did the church have in Rome?

Preaching to Great Numbers

What do you know of Paul's residence at this time?

What was Paul's subject for discussion with these Jews?

From what source did Paul draw his teaching?

What would he tell them about the kingdom?

How long did Paul continue these studies with the Jews?

What response did these Jews make to Paul's preaching?

Paul's Stay in Rome

How long did Paul stay in Rome?

What do you know of his place of residence?

How much liberty was Paul allowed in his preaching?

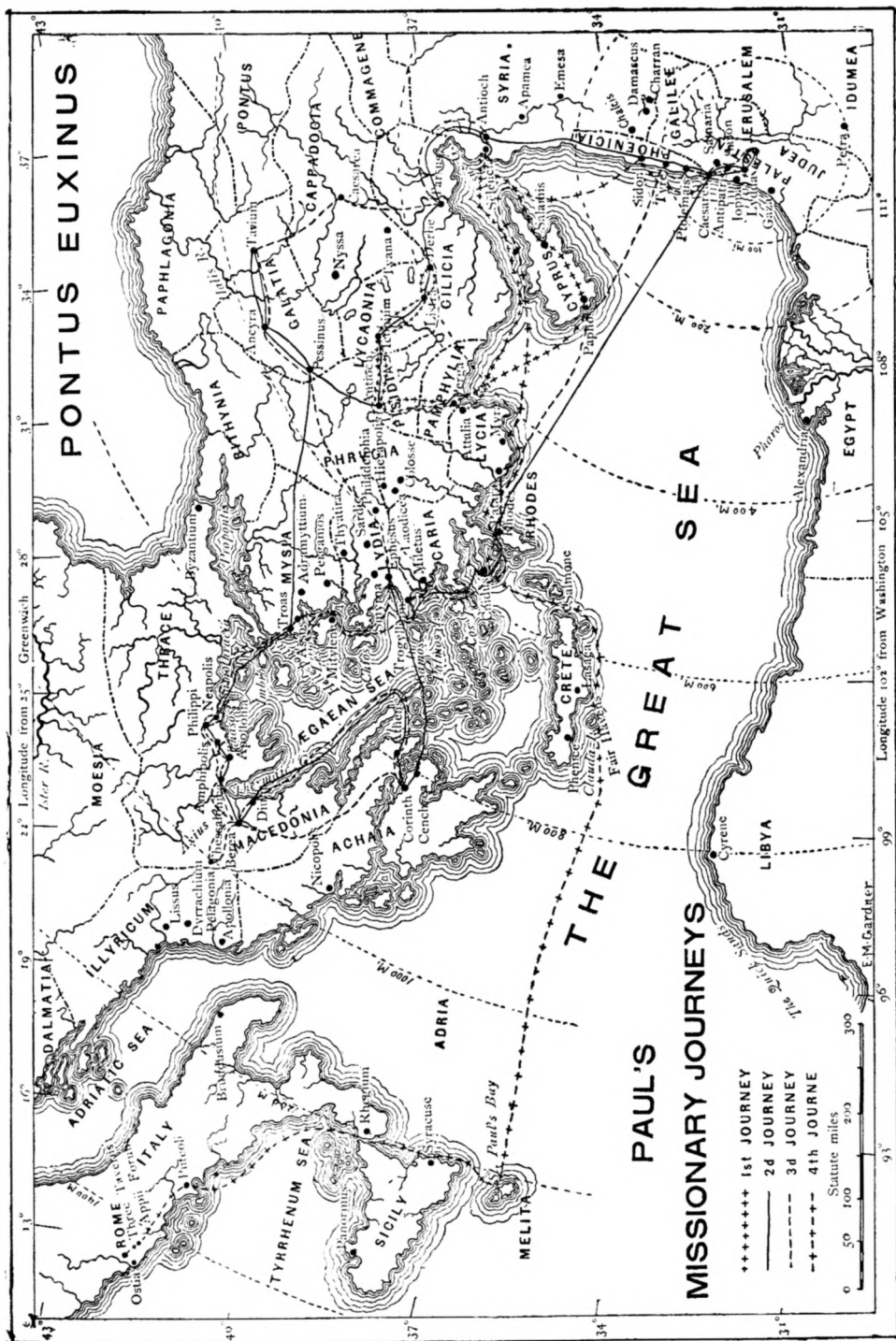
Was Paul's imprisonment a hindrance to his work?

Distinguish between preaching and teaching.

For what did Paul pray in connection with his preaching?

What evidence do we have that Paul was released from prison?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?



THIRD QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES

First Half

AIM.—To study the manner in which the Holy Spirit led the inspired writers of the Epistles to send letters of counsel and exhortation to Christian groups; to acquaint the pupil with the purpose and content of these letters, and to help him to live in the light of their teaching.

Lesson I—July 2, 1950

POWER OF THE GOSPEL

The Lesson Text

Rom. 1: 8-19

8 First, I thank my God through Je'-sus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

13 And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the 0en'-tles.

14 I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness;

19 Because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 15: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

June 26. M.....The Seed Is the Word of God (Luke 8: 4-15)
June 27. T.....Gospel Draws Men to Christ (John 6: 41-51)
June 28. W.....Faith Comes by Hearing the Gospel (Rom. 10: 8-21)
June 29. T.....We Are Begotten Through the Gospel (1 Cor. 4: 14-21)
June 30. F.....We Are Called Through the Gospel (2 Thess. 2: 13-17)
July 1. S.....Gospel Able to Save Our Souls (James 1: 16-27)
July 2. S.....Gospel Obedience Purifies the Soul (1 Pet. 1: 13-25)

TIME.—Late A.D. 57 or early A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Rome, and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Rome.

Introduction

The beginning of the church in Rome is shrouded in mystery; no one knows when it began, or who first preached the gospel there. There were men from Rome, both Jews and proselytes (Acts 2: 10), in the great gathering in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the gospel was first preached. That some of them embraced Christianity, and carried the gospel back to the imperial city is very probable. Both Irenaeus and Eusebius say that Peter and Paul preached the gospel in Rome and founded the church there. (Commentary on Romans, Hodge, p. 8.) But Paul had not been to Rome at the time he wrote his epistle. (Rom. 1: 11-13.) The Catholics claim that Peter went to Rome in the early part of the fifth decade A.D., but we can hardly conceive of his being in Rome while Paul was there, and never being mentioned as a visitor or helper of Paul. Nor can we think of Paul

writing a letter to the church at Rome, and never making mention of the Pope of the church who lived and labored there. And it would be presumptuous in Paul to wish to go to Rome that he might "impart some spiritual gift" to them if Peter was Pope and lived there.

That this letter was written from Corinth is fairly certain. Phoebe, a Christian from Cenchreae, near Corinth, is commended in the letter. (Rom. 16: 1, 2.) Gaius is mentioned as Paul's host, and he is known to be a Christian at Corinth. (Rom. 16: 23; 1 Cor. 1: 14.) Erastus was the treasurer of the city from which Paul wrote (Rom. 16: 23), and one Erastus is said to have been in Corinth. (2 Tim. 4: 20.) It is thought that the letter was written during the three months Paul stayed in Greece (Acts 20: 2, 3) before he went for the last time to Jerusalem.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Paul's Obligation.** Paul felt a special obligation to preach the gospel. He said God separated him from his mother's womb to preach. (Gal. 1: 15, 16.) Samuel's mother promised God she would lend her son to the Lord all the days of his life if God would give her a son. (1 Sam. 1.) Whether there was any such promise in connection with Paul's separation from birth we cannot know, but the zeal and devotion with which Paul served all his life are sufficient to suggest as much. Surely Samuel never felt more obligated to serve the Lord than Paul felt. Having been separated from birth for such service, and having been given the ability to render the service, and having been saved from sin and its condemnation, Paul felt that he must either preach the gospel or be lost. When men feel this way about preaching, they are not going to allow anything to keep them from preaching as they have opportunity. Salary does not enter into the consideration when one feels as did Paul. When brethren supported Paul, he gave all his time to preaching; but when they did not support him, he worked for his daily bread and preached as he had oppor-

tunity. This is not intended to justify selfish churches for not supporting gospel preachers. People who are too covetous to support men to preach the gospel do not deserve gospel blessings and privileges, and preachers are justified in refusing to labor for such churches. But the fact that a preacher is not on the pay roll of a church does not mean that he is not obligated to preach the gospel. Paul preached whether he was supported or not, and so must we who have the ability do today.

2. **Lack of Gospel Preaching.** What would be the result if we fail to preach the gospel? First, God would be displeased with those who have the ability to preach. The one-talent man had ability to use his master's money, but refused, or neglected, to do so, and his master was so displeased that he threw out this unprofitable servant. Next, the blood of our fellow men would be upon us if we preach not the gospel. We are watchmen on the wall to warn others of coming danger and doom. If we warn them and they give no heed to our warning, we are clean; but if we do not warn them and they are lost, their blood will be on our hands in

the judgment. What a fearful thing it will be in the judgment to find that we have the blood of many of our neighbors on our hands! How we will wish that we had told them of the gospel and led them to obey it! Next, unused ability tends to decrease even as used ability tends to increase. To him that has shall be given, but from him that has not shall be taken that which he has. (Matt. 25: 29.) The man who makes use of his talents will find that he has an increased amount to return to his Lord; but the man who does not use his talents will find that he has nothing to give his Lord in the day of accounts. Last, if there is no gospel preaching, there will be no Christians. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 2: 11.) Paul begat the Corinthians through the preaching of the gospel. (1 Cor. 4:

15.) And Peter says we are begotten by the word, which by the gospel is preached unto us. (1 Pet. 1: 23-25.) Since the gospel is the seed, it follows that if no gospel is preached, there will be no Christians. And farmers who are so lazy or stingy that they refuse to sow seed will never raise a crop. If they sow a gallon of seed to the acre when they should sow six gallons, they will not gather a full harvest. So churches that are too lazy, or stingy with their money, that they do not do much gospel seed sowing, will never grow in numbers as they would if they would sow abundantly. To refuse, or neglect, to sow abundantly will leave some soul untouched to go into eternity without God—a loss we cannot measure. Each church should reach every individual in the community with the gospel. Are we doing it?

Exposition of the Text

I. Personal Explanations (Rom. 1: 8-15)

I thank my God through Jesus Christ. Paul begins his personal remarks by commending them for that which was outstanding in them. He gave thanks to God, and he did so through Jesus Christ, thus recognizing the mediatorship of Christ. This is according to his teaching on the subject. (Rom. 7: 25; Eph. 5: 20; Col. 3: 17; Heb. 13: 15.) And it is what Jesus taught people to do. (John 14: 13; 16: 23, 24.)

Faith proclaimed throughout the world. This, of course, meant the then known world. Their faith was such as could be seen, observed, proclaimed, and appreciated by others. It was therefore more than mere mental assent; it was active, and showed itself by its action. "Show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith." (James 2: 18b.) So the church at Rome had done such good works that people in all parts of the world knew of their faith. This suggests the ready access which people had to Rome from all parts of the known world at that time.

God, whom I serve in my spirit. Paul called upon God to witness to the truth of his statements. It was not mere flattery, but a deep abiding interest in their welfare. To serve

God in one's spirit is to be sincere, and to render service from the heart. Spiritual service can come only from the heart; mechanical formal service does not come from the heart.

In the gospel of his Son. This spiritual service is that which is appointed in the gospel of Christ. Any act not appointed by the gospel is not spiritual service. Paul's service in the gospel was preaching. Others may render service in the gospel by doing other things we are taught in the gospel to do.

Mention of you in my prayers. Paul says his mention of them in prayer was unceasing. We do not pray as much as we should. We do not pray for each other as much as we should. We do not pray about the course of life we pursue as we should. Anything worth doing is a matter for earnest prayer. Paul prayed about going to Rome. The place of labor was with him a matter over which to pray, and we would do well to talk to God about the things we wish to do.

Impart unto you some spiritual gift. One reason why Paul wished to go to Rome was that he might impart to them a spiritual gift that would help establish them. Since none but apostles could lay hands on people and impart spiritual gifts, we safely conclude that no apostle had

his place of work or residence in Rome. Why would Paul wish to go there to impart spiritual gifts if Peter, who had all the power Paul had, lived there and labored with the church? Would even a Cardinal of the Catholic Church dare write such to his church in Rome today? It would be counted as an insult to the Pope, and none of them would dare to do such.

That I with you may be comforted in you. Hodge says of the word comforted as a translation of the Greek word, "This is probably too narrow. The word expresses all that excitement and strengthening of faith and pious feeling, as well as consolation, which is wont to flow from the communion of saints." (Commentary on Romans.) It was to be a mutual affair. Paul would expect to benefit them by imparting gifts, and he would be encouraged by their fellowship.

Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you. For a long time Paul had hoped and prayed that he might have the privilege of going to Rome. (Rom. 15: 22-28, 30-32.) He preached in many of the greatest cities of his time. Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, Philippi, as well as Damascus and Jerusalem were all principal cities in their districts. And now he wished to go to Rome, and then on into Spain that he might preach the gospel where it had never been preached, that he might not build upon another man's foundation. (Rom. 15: 19, 20, 28.) Though Paul desired to go to Rome, it is not always God's will to allow us to do what we desire. So Paul waited until it was God's good pleasure for him to go.

That I might have some fruit in you. The church at Rome was predominantly Gentile. And since Paul was the apostle unto the Gentiles, he wished to have fruit in them. The fruit would consist of two things; first, converts from the world to Christianity; second, growth and development in spiritual stature in those who were Christians. Paul was not seeking popularity, wealth, nor anything of a material nature; he was seeking spiritual fruit to the honor of God.

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians. By this Paul means

that he is obligated to preach the gospel to all nations. And by the statement *both to the wise and to the foolish*, he means all classes. So his obligation was to all classes of people in all nations. Churches are prone to overlook this last clause which includes all classes. Appeal is being made to those in middle class and higher, but rarely is much attention given to people below the middle class. Take notice of the work being done in your own community and see if this is true. If it is, what can be done to make it right?

I am ready to preach in Rome. Rome was the capital of the world, with its great and small and its rich and poor, its wise and unwise. It presented a great opportunity which Paul craved.

II. The Gospel for Jew and Greek

(Rom. 1: 16-19)

I am not ashamed of the gospel. That gospel Paul was ready to preach in Rome was one of which he was not ashamed. He would not add to it to make it acceptable to kings and senators. He would not take from it to satisfy their lust for license. He was not ashamed of its source, the Person whom it concerned, the way of life required by it, nor the condition upon which salvation was promised by it.

It is the power of God unto salvation. This is given as the reason why Paul was not ashamed of it. The enemies of man are the world, the flesh, and the devil, and they are working to bring about his destruction. God is working to overcome these enemies and save us. The gospel is the power of God to bring about this salvation. If man is saved at all it will be by the gospel. There is no salvation apart from the gospel. The gospel is not one of the powers used by the Lord to bring about our salvation; it is THE power of God. There are three things all Christians should realize, (1) all men are lost in sin; (2) the gospel is God's only power to save men from sin; and (3) Christians are God's only agents for preaching the gospel to the lost to save them from destruction. If we understand the value of souls, we will feel as did Paul, Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.

Therein is revealed the righteousness of God. This clause is introduced by the word *for* which suggests that this is the reason why the gospel is God's power to save. The gospel saves because therein is revealed the righteousness of God. But what is the righteousness of God? Whatever it is, it is revealed in the gospel, and it explains why the gospel is the power of God to save. Righteousness is an attribute of God, and it is made known to us in the gospel, as is the holiness of God, the mercy and love of God. But this cannot be the meaning of the word Paul used here. Greek words, as many of our English words, have more than one meaning, and the translators and commentators have to determine which meaning best fits the context. The verb form of this word is translated *justify* in many places, and it would have been much better to translate the noun form here *justification*. Moses E. Lard so translates it in his Commentary. Moses Stuart and Albert Barnes also gives the word this meaning. Bagster's Analytical Lexicon defines the word thus, "A provision or means for justification." And he gives this verse as the place where the word is so used. The phrase *of God* suggests God as the source of this justification. And by justification is meant the acquittal from guilt, accepting and treating as righteous. Man is not righteous in the absolute sense, and cannot be, for he cannot render sinlessly perfect obedience. But on account of the death of Christ for us, and our acceptance of him by faith. God can treat us as righteous; he can forgive us our sins and accept us as if we had never sinned. This justification from God is revealed in the gospel and is a mighty inducement to men to love God and accept Christ.

From faith unto faith. The phrase *from faith* is to be attached to the preceding phrase concerning justification. The sense of the whole sentence is—The gospel is God's power to save all who believe, for in the gospel is revealed a justification from God, granted by God, which justification is by faith, and not by works of merit which man is unable to do, in order to induce men to believe, or to become believers. "In the gospel is revealed the fact that God will justify

the believer, and this is done in order to induce men to believe." (Lard.) Realizing his inability to render perfect obedience to law, man is discouraged to begin with; he knows there is no hope for him. But men can believe, and they can be faithful under this system of grace which is by Jesus Christ. (John 1: 17; Rom. 6: 14.) Since salvation is offered to the believer, on condition of his faithfulness, men are encouraged to accept the justification revealed in the gospel. Therein is its power to attract and save us.

The righteous shall live by faith. This is an Old Testament text (Hab. 2: 4), to prove Paul's point. Those who expected to be justified by their works, or by their connection with Abraham, would deny the truth of Paul's statement; so Paul cited the old prophet who taught the same thing as proof of his position. Here again the arrangement of words seems poor. It rather is, Those made just, or justified, by faith shall live. It is true that we live, or walk, by faith (2 Cor. 5: 7), but Paul is talking about those who are justified by faith in this text, and not the rule by which people should live. It is those who are justified by faith who have life; it is not those who try to be justified by works that shall live.

Wrath of God revealed from heaven against ungodliness and unrighteousness. The word *wrath* denotes that in man which is dangerous and sinful, and which must be put away. (Eph. 4: 31; Col. 3: 8.) But in God it means his divine displeasure at sin, and his determination to punish the guilty. We must not attribute human passions to God. This wrath is revealed from heaven. It was so in the flood which destroyed the disobedient; it was so in Sodom, and in God's dealings with disobedient Israel. Ungodliness "means a failure in our duties to God" and unrighteousness means a failure in our duties to man. "The two terms together express the whole volume of human sins." (Lard.)

Hinder the truth in unrighteousness. What truth? Not gospel truth, for Paul goes on to say that the light of nature taught men better than to hinder the truth in question. So it refers to all truth about God which

men should have known prior to the revelation of the gospel. They hindered, or held down, the progress of that truth by their unrighteous lives. And men, even church members, may do that to the truth of the gospel today.

That which is known of God is man-

ifest in them. God had made certain truths manifest to the world; men had hindered that truth by their unrighteousness; so God had revealed his wrath in various ways against this unrighteousness by causing these men to suffer the consequences of their deeds.

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul is a good example to us as to how prayerful we should be. In his prayers he gave thanks, made petitions, made intercessions and supplications, for all men. (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2.)

2. The faith by which people are saved is not the mere assent of the mind. It may be said to consist of three things, (1) a knowledge or perception of the truth, (2) the persuasion as to the correctness of the matter believed, and (3) a trust and reliance upon him who is the object of one's faith.

3. Denominational commentators

have much to say about *imputed righteousness*. By this they mean that we cannot be righteous, but Jesus was perfectly righteous. And they say his righteousness is imputed to us, we are credited with it, and counted as possessing it. The Bible does not teach the doctrine. We do not possess actually or by imputation absolute righteousness. But on account of our acceptance of Jesus we are treated or accepted as if we had never sinned, and this God is able to do without being unjust because of the sufferings of Jesus in our behalf.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the beginning of the church in Rome?

What evidence do we have that Peter was not in Rome when Paul was there?

From what place was the letter to Rome written?

What is the date of this letter?

Golden Text Explained

When was Paul separated to the preaching of the gospel?

What Old Testament character was given to God from birth?

What else served to make Paul feel the responsibility of preaching the gospel?

Will the lack of support keep such men from preaching?

How would God be affected by our failure to preach the gospel?

How would our fellowmen be affected by our failure?

How would our failure to preach affect our ability to preach?

Why does the amount of gospel preaching affect the number of people to be saved?

Personal Explanations

How did Paul respect the mediatorship of Jesus in his prayers?

In what passages are we taught to do so?

What did Paul say of the faith of the Roman church?

What is meant by serving God in the spirit? How did Paul do it?

What were some of the subjects of Paul's prayers?

Why did Paul wish to go to Rome?

What blessing did Paul expect to get from his contact with the church there?

What great cities can you name in which Paul preached?

How could Paul have fruit among the Romans?

To what nations and classes was Paul indebted?

What classes of people are churches prone to neglect today?

The Gospel for Jew and Greek

What was there about the gospel of which Paul need not be ashamed?

What are man's three great enemies?

What is God's power to save man from these enemies?

What three things must all Christians realize to give them zeal to save others?

What is the meaning of the term *righteousness of God*?

Why is the gospel God's power to save? Whom does it save?

What is the meaning of the word justification?

What is the meaning of the phrase *from faith to faith*?

What Old Testament prophet did Paul quote for proof?

According to this prophet, who shall have life?

What is the wrath of God?

How is the wrath of God revealed?

Against what, and whom, is the wrath of God revealed?

How is the truth hindered?

What is ungodliness? Unrighteousness?

What is of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson II—July 9, 1950

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The Lesson Text

Rom. 5: 1-11

1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Je'-sus Christ;

2 Through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness;

4 And stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope:

5 And hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.

6 For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.

10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life;

11 And not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Je'-sus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Cor. 5: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—James 2: 14-26.

Daily Bible Readings

July 3. M.....Justified Freely by His Grace (Horn. 3: 21-30)
 July 4. T.....Justification Is in Christ (Rom. 8: 1-11)
 July 5. W.....Justified by Faith in Christ (Gal. 2: 11-21)
 July 6. T.....No Man Is Justified by the Law (Gal. 3: 6-14)
 July 7. F.....Justification by Law Severs from Christ (Gal. 5: 1-12)
 July 8. S.....Those Justified Are Heirs of God (Titus 3: 1-10)
 July 9. S.....Not Justified by Law of Moses (Acts 13: 32-41)

TIME.—Late A.D. 57 or early A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Corinth and Rome.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Rome.

Introduction

Since our lesson is on justification by faith, it will be well to notice by way of introduction some things by which we are not justified. First, we are not justified by faith only. The religious world at large teaches that men are justified by faith only, but the only time that phrase is used in the Bible it denies that men can be justified by faith only. (Read the Devotional Reading to see that James teaches that works of obedience to God's commandments have a part in our justification.)

Next, we are not justified by good works, by being morally clean.

There are many men who think they are going to heaven because they do not steal, lie, curse, kill, or commit adultery. They tell the truth, deal honorably with their neighbor, and help the poor, so they think they are sure for heaven. Preachers are responsible for men having this idea, because they will say in preaching funeral sermons that good men who never "professed religion" have gone to heaven because they were such good men. But Paul says we are not saved by our works of righteousness. (Tit. 3: 5.)

Again, we are not justified on the

ground of *perfect obedience* to gospel commandments. If no one could be saved without rendering perfect obedience to gospel commandments, no one would ever be saved, for none can render that perfect obedience. This does not mean that we can be saved without submission to the authority of Christ, without obeying his commands to the best of our ability. But it does mean that this obedience is not the ground of our justification. We are justified on account of the suffering of Christ for us, and his suffering is accepted in lieu of our penalty on condition of our faith in him, and not on condition that we render perfect obedience to him. We can believe in him; we cannot

render perfect obedience to him. Herein is the power of the gospel, because in it is revealed the justification by faith which God offers in order to induce men to believe in Christ. Men can believe in Christ and be faithful to him, and be saved from their sins and in spite of their ignorance and mistakes to which the ordinary human being is heir. This is a wonderful demonstration of the mercy and goodness of God, and an indication of the atoning and purifying power of the blood of Jesus Christ. It should encourage us, make us grateful to God, and make us determined that the suffering of Christ shall not be in vain in our behalf.

Golden Text Explained

1. What Is Meant by Walking: by Faith. Too many people have the idea that they are walking by faith when they do whatever they believe will suit the Lord. We are taught that faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord. (Rom. 10: 17.) If we walk by faith, we must do that which is taught in the word of the Lord. That which we cannot find taught in the Bible is human opinion, traditions of men, worldly wisdom. We are told that Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house, and that he did it by faith. (Heb. 11: 7.) Going back to the record by Moses, we learn that "According to all that God commanded Noah, so did he." (Gen. 6: 22.) From this we conclude that we do a thing by faith when we do it according to all that God commands us. So if we worship by faith, we must worship according to God's commandments. Since God has not commanded the burning of incense, or the playing of instruments of music, we cannot do these things by faith. No one can sprinkle water for baptism by faith because it is not according to the commandment of God.

2. Failure to Walk by Faith Is Sin.

When Paul said we walk by faith, not by sight, it is equal to saying, We do not walk by sight. Sight is one of the five physical senses, and stands for all of them. We are not to walk, be guided in our work and worship, by the five physical senses, or our judgment based on impres-

sions and conclusions gathered from our physical senses. We are to walk by faith, a spiritual sense, impressions and conclusions gained from the teaching of the Lord.

Cain and Abel offered sacrifices. (Gen. 4.) Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. (Heb. 11: 4.) So he did it according to God's commandment. His sacrifice was acceptable to God. But Cain offered the fruit of the ground instead of that which God commanded; he did not offer by faith. His sacrifice was rejected. Since God respected Abel's sacrifice, but did not respect Cain's sacrifice, Cain was wroth, hated his brother, and slew him. And why did he slay his brother? "Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3: 12.) Why was Abel's offering righteous? Because it was by faith; it was according to God's commandment. Why was Cain's offering evil? Because it was not by faith; it was according to human wisdom; it was not according to God's commandment. Therefore we conclude that whatever in worship we do which is not by faith is an evil thing; with it God will be displeased, and the person who offers it is "of the evil one." (1 John 3: 12.)

Cain could very well have reasoned as many do today, that God had not said, Thou shalt not offer the fruit of the ground. He could have reasoned that when Abel offers a lamb, he gives the fruit of his labors;

but that when he (Cain) offered the produce of the field, he was offering the fruit of his labor. And since God had not forbidden it, surely it would be acceptable to him. There are those who say that since God has not said, Thou shalt not burn incense in worship, or Thou shalt not play instruments in worship, there is no sin about doing these things. So Cain thought; but John says his offering was evil. And we know that it was evil, not because that which was offered was not fit to be

offered, but because God had not commanded it. So things people do as worship today are evil, not because they are not fit to be done, but simply and solely because we walk by faith, and one cannot do a thing which is not commanded while walking by faith. And one cannot do that which is not commanded without doing an evil thing. Doing what God commands is righteous; doing what is not commanded is evil. We must respect the silence of the Bible as well as when it speaks.

Exposition of the Text

I. Fruits of Justification (Rom 5: 1-

5)

Being therefore justified by faith.

The Lesson Text does not develop the doctrine of justification by faith; this argument has been developed by Paul in the preceding chapters. He states it here as a conclusion, and then sets out to show what are the fruits of justification in our lives.

We have peace with God. Peace of mind is the fruit of justification. When one is forgiven of his sins, he no longer fears the punishment of God for these sins, and he no longer dreads to meet God in the judgment to answer for those sins. But we should emphasize the fact that this peace is gained as a result of justification *by faith*. If one sought justification by works, he could never have this peace. Gratuitous justification comes on condition of our faith in Christ, and not as the payment of a debt for meritorious works we have done.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This peace comes through Jesus Christ, on account of his work of atonement for us. We had sinned, and were due to suffer the penalty of eternal destruction. Jesus died in our place, and made it possible for God to forgive us. When God forgives us, justifies us, we are at peace with him, and not subject to eternal suffering on account of our sins. Of course this does not mean that once we get into Christ we can commit any sin we wish and rely on the death of Christ to take care of that sin without our repenting of it. Those who believe the doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace" make a mistake here, thinking that once they

are justified by faith they have peace with God regardless of what they do from that time forward. This verse deals primarily with alien sins. Being justified from alien sins and being now children of God, we have peace with him. But the same thing is true with reference to the sins of a child of God. If one is forgiven a sin, he has peace with God in regard to that particular sin.

We have had our access by faith into this grace. Through Jesus Christ we have had—this refers to something in the past. We have had access, or means of entrance into. "We are indebted to Christ not only for peace, but also for access to this grace (this state of justification), which is the ground for our peace." (Hodge.) And our access into this grace was on the condition of our faith in Christ.

We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Brother Lard says the phrase *through whom* should be repeated here, making it read, Through whom we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And certainly it is through Christ that we have our hope; he is the basis of our hope. (Heb. 6: 17-20.) Christ in us is the hope of glory. (Phil. 1: 27.)

We also rejoice in our tribulations. Not only do we rejoice in our hope of glory, but we also rejoice in tribulations. Christians have both present and future grounds for rejoicing. "The Christian rejoices in hope of future good; but he exults over present afflictions." We should rejoice in tribulations because, (1) it is one way to honor God (1 Pet. 4: 12-16); (2) it is a means of purifying us (1 Pet. 1: 7); (3) it is evidence that God

is dealing with us as his children (Heb. 12: 7-11); and (4) it works steadfastness.

Stedfastness worketh approvedness. The verb *worketh* is understood, and should be supplied. As tribulation worketh steadfastness, so steadfastness worketh approvedness. By this is meant that God approves of our steadfastness, or patience under trials. (James 1: 2-4, 12.)

Approvedness worketh hope. When one has endured tribulation, he is approved of God; and being approved of God gives us hope; it makes us sure of his acceptance of us in glory.

Hope putteth not to shame. By this Paul means that we will surely realize that for which we hope; we shall not be disappointed when we stand in the judgment. This does not mean that all who think they are going to heaven will surely get there. (Matt. 7: 21-23.) But those who have been justified by faith, have peace with God, rejoice in hope, patiently endure trials have scriptural reason for their hope, and they will not be disappointed.

Love of God shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Whether the phrase *love of God* means his love for us, or our love for him, or simply our love of all good, which love we have from God, is difficult to say. The expression is capable of either meaning, and commentators are divided on the matter. But this love is *shed abroad in our hearts*; it is not poured into our hearts in a mechanical way; it is not forced upon us contrary to our wishes. The Holy Spirit is the agent who sheds abroad this love in our hearts. How he does this work is not said, but we may be sure he uses his sword as his instrument. (Eph. 6: 17.)

Which was given unto us. Here Paul affirms that the Holy Spirit is given to us. And we may be sure that all who have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit are among the number to whom God has given the Holy Spirit. Paul says our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit which we have from God. (1 Cor. 6: 19.) He is said to dwell in us. (Rom. 8: 9-11.) He is given to all who obey God. (Acts 5: 32.) He is given to

us because we are children of God. (Gal. 4: 6.) He is promised to all who believe the gospel, repent of sins, and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2: 38.)

II. Justification on Account of Christ's Death (Rom. 5: 6-11)

While we were yet weak. This means without strength to accomplish the thing in mind, and that is our justification. Man was weak, without wisdom and strength, to devise a way of salvation, or to put one into operation if he could have devised it. Exposed to the wrath of God on account of sins; dependent upon the mercy of God for a way out of his condition.

In due season Christ died for the ungodly. The words *due season* mean *set time*; the proper time, fixed in the counsel of God. Paul says "in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son." (Gal. 4: 4.) The time of the appearance of Christ was not a matter of chance; it came when it was most opportune; when it was best for man, and would give most glory to God. And Paul adds that he died for the ungodly. There are some who say that he died for the elect and them only. But since he died for the ungodly, and since all are ungodly, we conclude that he died for all. (2 Cor. 5: 14.)

Scarcely for a righteous man will one die. Beginning here, Paul builds up an illustration of the greatness of God's love for us. He begins by saying that it will be difficult to find one who will die for a righteous man. The word *righteous* is not to be taken here to mean a Christian, but simply a just man; one who does all that law requires of him, but no more.

For the good man some one would even dare to die. While none will die for the just man, it is possible to find some one who would die for the good man. "The difference between the words *righteous* and *good*, as here used, is that which, in common usage, is made between *just* and *kind*. The former is applied to a man who does all that the law or justice can demand of him, the latter to him who is governed by love. The just man commands respect; the good man calls forth affection." (Hodge.)

God commends his love toward us. No one will die for a just man; some one might die for a good man; but God commends his love to us by giving his Son to die for his enemies. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15: 13.) But Jesus had greater love for us than this, for he laid down his life for his enemies. Some have the idea that God was angry with man on account of his sins, and that he is reconciled to man by the death of Jesus, as well as man being reconciled to God by that death. But if God so loved as to give his Son, who can think of him needing to be reconciled to man. The justice and holiness of God would not allow him to forgive man without the penalty of sin being suffered. But the mercy of God moved him to provide an offering for sin, so Jesus suffered in man's place, and made it possible for God to forgive without violating his sense of justice and holiness.

Much more being now justified, shall we be saved. If while we were sinners God gave his Son to die for us, much more now that we are his children will he be willing to save us. If he was willing to do the biggest thing possible for us, he will surely do things not so great and costly. (Rom. 8: 32.) But in this verse we are said to be justified by his blood. The life is in the blood. (Lev. 17: 11.) In shedding his blood, he died, he gave his life, for us. God accepts this suffering, this death, shedding of blood, as the penalty for our sins, and so forgives us. For this reason we are said to be justified by his blood, saved by his death, reconciled by his death, redeemed by the blood. But not only are

we justified by his blood, but we are saved from the wrath of God through him. There are some who deny that we are in any danger of the wrath of God; they even deny that God exercises wrath towards his creatures. But the wrath of God is as real as his love, and it is as devastating as his love is beneficent.

For if while we were enemies. This verse is largely a repetition of the matter found in the preceding verse. Here again we have mention of our being reconciled to God, but no mention made of God being reconciled to man. If God so loved us when we were enemies that he gave his Son to die for us, surely now, being reconciled, being his children, we shall be saved by his life. In his death he was humiliated, made to appear weak and helpless. But in such a state he saved, justified, reconciled us to God. Much more shall we be saved by his life, his living state. Life is here contrasted with death. He can do as much, or more, in life than in death. If in death he reconciled enemies, surely in life he can save his friends. Life and death; enemies and friends are contrasted.

Not only so, but we rejoice in God. Some connect this with verse 3, making it say, we not only rejoice in tribulation, but we also rejoice in God. This is possible, but it seems remote. It is better to say, We not only rejoice in hope of future salvation and eternal glory, but we now rejoice in God; there are present joys and blessings in our relationship to God. And all these we have and enjoy through Jesus Christ, through whom we have been reconciled to God, and have been enabled to rejoice in Jehovah as our God.

Topics for Discussion

1. Peace with God is not found in good works, systems of human philosophy, social influence, or vast wealth: it is found only in that state of justification which comes by faith in Jesus Christ. This being true, it is within the reach of the humblest and poorest.

2. The learned university professors of our day deny that the blood of Christ has any power to atone for sin. They deny that Jesus was di-

vine. They say he was a great teacher, and that he died a martyr's death. Paul believed we are justified, forgiven, acquitted from sin, through the blood of Jesus; we are redeemed by his blood; we are washed from our sins in his blood. Why he had to shed his blood that we might be saved, may be beyond our power to understand, but we can receive it by faith.

3. God's love for us, and Christ's

death for us exert an influence on us for good. The preaching of these truths will do more to prevent sin

and excite deeds of goodness and sacrifice than all the systems of human philosophy put together.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Can you disprove the doctrine of justification by faith only?

Why can we not be justified by our good works?

Are we justified by perfect obedience to gospel commandments?

If that be so, why cannot we be justified in disobedience to gospel commandments?

Golden Text Explained

How do we walk by faith?

Show how Noah walked by faith in building the ark.

Show how we walk by faith in worship.

What is meant by walking by sight?

Using the example of Cain, show that failure to walk by faith is sinful.

Did Cain do something God had said Thou shalt not do?

May a thing not evil in itself be sinful in worship? Illustrate.

Fruits of Justification

What is the first fruit of justification in our lives?

Of what does this peace consist?

Explain why this peace comes through Jesus Christ.

Can one in Christ be robbed of this peace?

How may it be done?

What is the grace into which we have access by faith?

In what do we who are justified rejoice?

How is Christ the basis of our hope?

Why should we rejoice in tribulations?

What is worked in our lives by steadfastness?

What is worked in our hearts by approvedness?

What is meant by hope not putting us to shame?

What is shed abroad in our hearts?

By what agent is this love shed abroad in our hearts?

What is taught in our lesson about the Holy Spirit being given to us?

Justification on Account of Christ's Death

In what condition were we when Christ died for us?

What is meant by the due season?

For whom does Paul say Christ died?

What is the meaning of the word righteous? The word good?

In what way does God commend his love to us?

Does the Bible teach that God had to be reconciled to us?

What part had the blood of Christ in our justification?

From what does Paul say we are now saved?

How has God shown his wrath in times past? How will he show it in the future?

What is meant by being saved by the life of Christ?

In what do we now rejoice?

What connection does Jesus Christ have with our rejoicing in God?

What have we now received through Christ?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson III—July 16, 1950

A LIVING SACRIFICE

The Lesson Text

Rom. 12: 1-13

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service.

2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith.

4 For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office:

5 So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.

6 And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of our faith;

7 Or ministry, *let us give ourselves* to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth, *let him do it* with liberality; he that ruleth, with

diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10 In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another;

11 In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer;

13 Communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For *ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body*” (1 Cor. 6: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 12: 14-21.

Daily Bible Readings

July 10. M..... Self-denial Demanded of Disciples (Luke 9: 57-62)
 July 11. T..... Sacrificial Suffering To Be Expected (John 15: 13-23)
 July 12. W..... Dying Daily For The Lord (1 Cor. 15: 29-34)
 July 13. T..... Manifesting Jesus In Our Body (2 Cor. 4: 7-15)
 July 14. F..... Body Not For Sin, But For The Lord (1 Cor. 6: 12-20)
 July 15. S..... Keeping The Body Under Bondage (1 Cor. 9: 19-27)
 July 16. S..... Body May Be Used By Sin (Rom. 7: 18-25)

TIME.—Late A.D. 57 or early A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Corinth and Rome.

Persons.—Paul and the Christians at Rome.

Introduction

All the teaching of the Lord may be called doctrine. (Titus 2.) Yet there is a distinction to be made between the *doctrinal* and *practical* elements of Christianity. The first eleven chapters of Romans are devoted to the announcement and development of the doctrines of justification by faith, deliverance from sin, election, etc.; and the last five chapters are devoted to practical duties of those who have been justified by faith. The value of the doctrinal portion is emphasized by the fact that Paul enforces the necessity of the practical on the basis of the doctrinal. Having developed the doctrinal, he says “Therefore” you should follow this or that course. Therefore, or on account of what has gone before, you ought to do this or that. Since God has saved you by his grace; since he gave his Son to die for you when you were his enemies, you ought to live for him. There are those who belittle doctrine. They think doctrinal preaching is divisive in its nature and tendency. Usually this attitude is an indication that the one holding it also holds some doctrinal positions which will not stand the light of investigation. But since prac-

tical issues grow out of, and are based upon, doctrines, we can see that if one holds to unscriptural doctrines, his life, the practical issue of doctrines, will be unscriptural. So it is *very* important that we learn the doctrines as taught by the apostles, and that we learn how to make scriptural applications of them in our daily living. Many times we make the mistake of telling people what they should do, how they should live, but we do not show them that the reason for such course is based upon some great fundamental doctrine. For example, Paul said women are not to exercise authority over men. (1 Tim. 2: 12.) He did not make the statement and try to enforce it by apostolic authority, though he might well have done so. But he taught them that this was true because of two great fundamental facts. First, man was created first, and then woman. Second, woman was first to sin, and on account of this she is to be in submission to man. So the practical issues of life are determined by great facts and doctrines. If we do not know these, we may not prove steadfast in the practical issues of life.

Golden Text Explained

1. Bought With a Price. Our deliverance from sin is taught by the use of two familiar figures of speech. One is death. When a slave dies, he no longer belongs to, nor is he subject to, his master. So we are said to die to sin, and when dead to sin, we are no longer under the dominion of sin. (Rom. 6.) The other figure is that of a purchase. When a slave was bought, he was no longer under the dominion of, nor was he obligated to work for, his first master; but being bought by another, he was obligated to work for the one who bought him. Our text deals with this figure. We have been bought with a price, and we belong to him by whom we were purchased. (1) The purchaser was Jesus Christ. "For thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5: 9.) He has said his yoke is easy and his burden is light. (Matt.

11: 30.) So service to him is a pleasure, and promises the greatest rewards one can imagine. (2) The price was the blood of Christ. "And didst purchase unto God with thy blood." "The church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) Redeemed with precious blood, even the blood of Christ. (1 Pet. 1: 19.) (3) That from which we are redeemed. "That he might redeem us from all iniquity." (Tit. 2: 14.) "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law." (Gal. 3: 13.) We are crucified with him that we may no longer be in bondage to sin. (Rom. 6: 6.) (4) That to which we are redeemed. "And didst purchase unto God with thy blood." (Rev. 5: 9.) We are redeemed from the bondage of sin to belong to God, to be his people. "That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession." (Tit. 2: 14.) You were the servants of sin (Satan), but now ye have become the servants of righteousness (Christ). (Rom. 6: 17, 18.)

2. **Glorify God in Your Body.** This is Paul's conclusion from the fact that we have been bought with the blood of Christ. We are obligated to Christ to serve him for the same reason that a slave is obligated to serve the new master who bought him. In the verses preceding our Golden Text Paul says (1) the body was not made for fornication, but for the Lord. We may generalize, and say that the body was not made to be used in sin; it was made to be used for the glory of God. (2) The body is a member of Christ; it is joined to Christ in such way that what the body does reflects on Christ. Whatever the hand does, the body gets credit or blame; so whatever we do as members of Christ, he gets credit or blame. For this reason we must be exceedingly careful to do only those things which glorify God. (3) The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have from God. (1 Cor. 6: 19.) For this reason the body must be kept clean. A temple is the dwelling place of deity. The body is such a dwelling place, and for this reason we must keep the body free from moral filth. If we do those things which glorify God, the body will be a fit place for him to dwell. And we may add (4) the body is to be raised, made incorruptible, to dwell in heaven forever. Surely that which is destined for so glorious an experience should be kept as clean as possible and be used for as glorious purposes as possible while it lives here.

These considerations should (1) give us a more noble conception and estimation of the body in which we live. Though it is adapted to sinful purposes, it was not originally so intended; and when it is so used, it is miserably prostituted to baser purposes than that for which it was created. And (2) these considerations should lead us to be more careful in the use we make of our bodies. Our eternal destiny depends on the use we make of our bodies.

Exposition

I. Devoted in Both Body and Mind

(Rom. 12: 1, 2)

I beseech you therefore by mercies

of the Text

of God. Paul has taught that we are saved from sin, and that we have the hope of eternal life on account of the

sacrifice of Christ and by the grace and mercy of God. He now brings all the weight of these matters to bear as a motive for the devotion of both body and mind to God. "Whatever gratitude the soul feels for pardon, purity, and the sure prospect of eternal life, is called forth to secure its consecration to that God who is the author of all these mercies." (Hodge.)

Present your bodies a living sacrifice. Emphasis is placed here upon the body. There are those who think they are not responsible for what the body does, that they will not have to answer in judgment for the deeds of the body. But Paul teaches us to present the body as a sacrifice to God. It is to be a *living* sacrifice. This may mean (1) living in contrast to dead sacrifices under the law; or (2) it may mean continual. As "living water" means constantly flowing water; "living bread" meant bread ever present and effectual to give life, so this means bodies constantly employed in such activities as will honor God. We might also suggest a third idea, that the body is to be given to God while it has life; do not wait until all the life, vitality and strength with which God endowed it, have been used up in the service of Satan, and then ask God to save the soul. Give yourself to God while the body has life, and while you can render a service worthwhile to the glory of God.

Holy, acceptable, spiritual service. Not only is the body to be given a living, but it is to be a holy, sacrifice. As the lamb under the law was to be without spot or blemish, so the body is to be given without the defilement and pollution of sin upon it. Evil thoughts, vulgar conversation, and ungodly deeds defile the body. (Matt. 15: 18-20.) If they are thus given to God, they are *acceptable*, that is well-pleasing to God. And this is our *spiritual* service. The word translated *spiritual* means that which pertains to the mind; it denotes an inward or spiritual contrasted with the outward and formal sacrifices of the Jews.

Be not fashioned according to this world. Those who walk according to the course of this world are dead in sin. (Eph. 2: 1, 2.) We must not allow the world to determine the

course we pursue, but we are to take our direction from the Lord.

Be transformed by renewing of your mind. The body is to be given as indicated, and now the mind is to be renewed, transformed into the likeness of the Lord, and so the complete devotion of the whole being to God. "Cherish no more a spirit devoted to the world and sinfully conforming to it; cultivate a new and different spirit, one devoted to God, one which will love and practice what is good and pleasing to God." (Stuart.)

That you may prove what is the . . . will of God. The word translated *prove* is an assayer's term, and describes what he does when he determines the purity and value of metals. One commentator uses the word *learn*, another the word *judge* in place of *prove*. Many people see no sense in some things God requires. It is because they have not been renewed in mind; they have not been transformed by the renewing of their minds so that they can prove, judge, or determine what is good and acceptable to God. They look at his requirements through the eyes of the world, and not through the eyes of a transformed, regenerated person.

II. Unity of Many Members in Christ (Rom. 12: 3-8)

Not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. This is a warning against pride, and exhortation to humility. People are prone to judge success by the wrong standards. A man with a lot of money is liable to think he knows more about how to run the affairs of the church than those who do not have as much money as he has; and he may even think he should have a greater voice in the affairs of the church because he puts more money into it than others.

According as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. This is a difficult phrase. Lard says faith here is not that which comes by hearing, but the miraculous gift of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Cor. 12: 9. Barnes says, "The meaning is, judge yourselves, or estimate yourselves, by your piety." Stuart says, "Let each one estimate his gifts by the principles which the gospel has revealed." But the practical lesson for us is that

God has given these gifts, whether they are natural or miraculous, and no one is to be proud as if he had lifted himself above his fellow man. If his gifts were greater than others, God was to be praised, not the man who exercised the gift.

Many members in one body. The physical body is used for an illustration. As it has many members, and all members do not have the same office, so is the body of Christ. It is composed of many members and they cannot all have the same office. God has set us in the body as it pleased him. (1 Cor. 12: 18.) If he has given one a more prominent place than another, that is no cause for glorying over the other. It is cause for thanksgiving, and a feeling of responsibility and obligation. 1 Cor. 12: 12-31 treats of this subject in detail.

One body in Christ. Paul says there is one body. (Eph. 4: 4.) And there is but one body. (1 Cor. 12: 20.) There is but one body over which Jesus is head. Paul says that body is the church. (Eph. 1: 22; Col. 1: 18.) It follows therefore that there is but one church over which Jesus is the head, that is authorized by him, and that shall be claimed by him as his bride.

And severally members one of another. As all the members of the physical body are animated by one human spirit, and kept clean by the blood; so all who are members of the body, the church, of Christ are animated by the one Spirit and kept clean by his blood. And as the members of the human body are interrelated and interdependent, so the members of the body of Christ are mutually helpful in all ways needful. (1 Cor. 12: 25, 26.)

Whether prophecy. Prophets were those who spoke by inspiration to edify, exhort, and console. (1 Cor. 14: 3.) They were next in rank to the apostles. (1 Cor. 12: 28.)

Or **ministry.** Whether this **ministry** and **ministering** is that of the deacons and deaconesses, or whether it applies to other types of service, no one seems to know, and few commentators take a positive position. Lard is inclined to think it refers to deacons; but Barnes thinks it refers to those who serve by preaching. We will be safe in saying that in what-

ever way we are able to serve, we should give ourselves heartily to that service.

He that teacheth. Teachers were third in rank according to Paul's order. (1 Cor. 12: 28.) Both men and women were teachers. (Tit. 2: 3, 4.)

He that exhorteth. To exhort means to call or to urge people to respond, to do what they have been taught is their duty to do. Some hold the idea that preachers and exhorters must go in pairs to accomplish the most good; that Paul taught and Barnabas exhorted. (Acts 4: 36.)

He that giveth. Whether this means individual giving, or **imparting, distributing** by those whose business it is to do such is difficult to determine. Those who think the word **ministry** in verse 7 refers to deacons say this refers to individual giving; those who think **ministry** does not refer to deacons say this refers to them and that they were to impart that which was collected to those in need, and to do it with singleness of heart.

He that ruleth. This refers to elders who were to be overseers of the church. They are to rule with diligence, as those who must give account of those under them. (Heb. 13: 17.)

He that showeth mercy. This refers to those who care for those who need mercy, pity, so the sick, and those straying from the right. Cheerfulness would be much in place among the sick and discouraged.

III. Duty of Each to All (Rom. 12: 9-13)

Let love be without hypocrisy. It must be sincere; not merely in word. (1 John 3: 17, 18.) The love of the early church was such that they called nothing their own, but divided with those who were in need. Do we love that much today?

Abhor that which is evil. To abhor is to hate, detest, and will lead us to avoid, shun. If we can learn to hate all evil, and love all good, we will have the problem of right-living solved. "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." (Psalm 119: 104.) The more we understand and appreciate the will of God as revealed in the Bible, the more will we love the good and hate the evil.

In love of the brethren. Christians are to love affectionately, as parents love children, the tenderest love known among us, as is suggested by the Greek word for *tenderly affectioned*.

In honor preferring one another. Commentaries at hand all agree this should read in esteem, or showing respect, we should set examples one to another. We are not to let any be more kind than we; we are to excel others in giving honor to others.

In diligence not slothful. This urges us to zealous activity. People who are always late to church; those who are appointed to visit the sick, do a job of advertizing for the church, or any other piece of work, but who never get it done until the last minute, and then half do it, violate this teaching. They can never be worth much to the Lord or his church. The following exhortations *fervent in spirit* means ardent in mind; and *serving the Lord* indicates the sphere in which we are to be diligent and fervent.

Rejoicing in hope. Hope is the

ground of our rejoicing. We rejoice in anticipation of the rewards for service, the association with God, the angels, and all the redeemed. The Christian has more cause for rejoicing than all the world put together. *Patient in tribulation.* Taking our troubles and trials meekly, without murmuring. *Steadfast in prayer.* These three exhortations go together. In our rejoicing we give thanks; in our tribulations we ask for strength and courage.

Communicating to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Lard translates, "Be sharers in the wants of the holy; keeping on in love for strangers." To communicate is to give. There is not as much hospitality among us as should be. We live in crowded quarters, and we think we have to observe certain forms to entertain company, and not being able, or willing to be inconvenienced, we neglect to be hospitable. Likely we turn the Lord away from our doors and tables when we refuse to show hospitality to strangers. (Heb. 13: 2.)

Topics for Discussion

1. If bodies are to be given as holy sacrifices to God, is it right to cultivate habits which render the body unclean?

2. In the renewing of the mind there is a constant cultivation which brings the mind into harmony with the mind of God. By this process we come to love the things God loves, and to hate the things he hates.

3. Proper respect for gifts of others, proper valuation of our own gifts, and a willingness on the part of all to encourage each other in the proper use of these gifts and abilities, will keep down all strife and contention; no one will be seeking advantage, honor, glory for himself; no one will feel hurt or jealous when others excel in service.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Distinguish between the doctrinal and practical elements of Christianity.

What emphasizes the importance of doctrinal portions of this letter?

What is the result of holding to false doctrines?

Show how Paul based common relationships on doctrines.

What may result from a lack of knowledge of doctrines?

Golden Text Explained

What two figures of speech are used to teach us of our deliverance from sin?

Can you give passages of scripture which teach that Jesus purchased us?

Quote scriptures to prove that his blood was the price paid.

From what are we redeemed?

To what have we been redeemed?

For what was the body made?

Of what are we members? What is implied by this?

Of what is our body the temple? What practical lesson is derived from this?

What is suggested by the resurrection of the body?

What considerations are suggested to us by these lessons with reference to our bodies?

Devoted in Body and Mind

Why are we to present our bodies living sacrifices?

What is suggested by the word living?

What is meant by holy? Acceptable? And spiritual service?

What is meant by being fashioned according to this world?

How are we transformed? Into whose likeness are we transformed?

What is meant by proving the will of God?

Unity and Many Members in Christ

How does Paul teach the lesson of humility?

What is meant by the measure of faith?

What does Paul use to illustrate his lesson about the body of Christ?

How does Paul teach the unity of the body of Christ?

What is the relationship of members one to another?

What is meant by prophecy? By ministry? By teaching? By exhorting?

What is the giving mentioned here? How is it to be done?

Who are to do the ruling? How is it to be done?

To whom is mercy to be shown? And whose duty to show it?

Duty of Each to All

What is hypocrisy? What are we to exercise without hypocrisy?

What is meant by preferring one another in honor?

What does Paul teach about diligence?

What is meant by fervent in spirit? And by serving the Lord?

What does Paul teach about hope?

In what are we to be patient?

What is taught about prayer? Is this teaching easy to follow?

What is taught here about hospitality?

Are people as hospitable now as they should be? How can the situation be corrected?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IV—July 23, 1950

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Lesson Text

Rom. 14: 10-21

10 But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.

11 For it is written,

As I live, saith the Lord, to me

every knee shall bow,

And every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.

14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Je'-sus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 For if because of meat thy

brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men.

19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *to do anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For each man shall bear his own burden: (Gal. 6: 5.)*

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 25: 14-28.

Daily Bible Readings

July 17. M..... Each Has Only Enough For Himself (Matt. 25: 1-13)

July 18. T..... Consequence of Disobedience (Matt. 25: 31-46)

July 19. W..... Each Man Shall Render Account (Matt. 16: 21-28)

July 20. T..... Take Care To Keep Yourself Right (Luke 12: 13-21)

July 21. F..... Take Heed To Thyself (1 Tim. 4: 12-16)

July 22. S. We Are To Do Our Own Business (1 Thess. 4: 9-12)

July 23. S..... Each One Lay By In Store (1 Cor. 16: 1-9)

TIME.—Late A.D. 57 or early A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Corinth and Rome.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Rome.

Introduction

The importance of the individual is emphasized in the gospel. Under the law the nation held such a large place that the individual was almost lost. In fact the Jews lost sight of the individual, and thought salvation belonged to them because they belonged to the nation. They looked upon themselves as being the people of God, and all others as being so far beneath them that they could not even associate with them. For this reason Peter was slow to take the gospel to Cornelius, and his brethren called him to account for doing so. (Acts 10.) But under the gospel it is different. The Jew was born into the nation, but we make the choice ourselves. Entering the kingdom is an individual matter, and each person must make his own decision, and take the steps necessary to bring one into the kingdom. Under the law some offerings were made for the people as a whole, but under the gospel each person offers his own worship to God, and it is acceptable or not according to the relation and condition of heart of that particular individual.

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25: 14-30) should be read in this connection. In it we are taught the lesson of individual responsibility. The master of those slaves made each one

responsible for the amount of money he was able to handle. Talents represent responsibility; not ability. For talents were given according to ability. So our Lord holds us responsible for what we are able to do in his kingdom. If we accept responsibility and discharge our obligations according to our ability, our Lord will be pleased and reward us. But if, like the one-talent man, we refuse to accept responsibility because we are afraid we will make a mistake, or because of indifference and disinterest in the Lord's kingdom, we will be cast out in the day of accounts. It should be noticed that when the master of those servants called them to give account of what they had done, they did not organize and give a combined report of their activities. Each one gave account of his individual work and accomplishments. So we will not be able to say in the judgment that we were members of a good church on earth which did a lot of mission work, fed many widows and orphans; we will have to give an individual report of individual labors performed. It will be as personal and individual as if I and the Lord were the only two beings in the universe.

Golden Text Explained

1. Each Must Decide For Christ.

Each person must bear his own burden in making the decision to become a Christian. Parents cannot do that for us. They can set good examples, and they can encourage their children; but - each one must examine the scriptures for himself to be sure of doing the will of the Lord. Men often say that the family religion is carried in the name of the wife and mother of that family, as if it were enough for the whole family for the wife and mother to be a Christian. Homes cannot be the Christian homes they should be as long as one parent lives for the devil. Children cannot be given the rearing and training they deserve, and which is the duty of parents to give,

unless both parents are Christians. Each one must make his own decision, and take that step by himself, that he may fulfill his obligations and discharge his duties in such way as to please the Lord.

2. **Each Must Choose His Field Of Labor.** We do not all have ability to do the same thing. Paul argues that since the body is not all hands, or all eyes, so the body of Christ is composed of members with gifts differing from each other that altogether we might do the work God expects of the church. If all were preachers, or all were singers, where would be those who support such work? So it is our duty to examine ourselves and determine what we are best qualified to do, and then it is our duty

to do that thing to the best of our ability. It is human to minimize our ability so we may avoid responsibility. And many people go through life telling themselves that they do not have ability to do anything in the church. So they shoulder no personal responsibility. They are like the one-talent man, and in the day of judgment will be classed with the wicked, not because they lied, murdered, stole, or committed adultery, but simply because they did not choose a field of labor and do something for the Lord. There is no place in heaven for *do-nothings*.

3. **Each Must Meet Temptations.** Meeting temptations is an individual affair. It is true that we may shield others from the full force of temptations; it is true we can pray for them and give them courage in time of temptations. But we cannot make the final decisions for them. The one being tempted must finally summon the courage to turn his back upon the tempter, or be carried into the swift current of sin which leads out into the ocean of destruction. And the best time to make these decisions is before we get into the heat of temptation. If we wait until we

are tempted to make a decision, we will have difficulty thinking straight, and reaching just and holy conclusions. But if we make our decisions what we will do before we get into temptations, and make our resolutions as to what we will answer the tempter, we will have the battle half won.

4. **Each Must Answer For Himself In Judgment.** We can depend somewhat upon friends to give us encouragement in the battles of life, even though we must make the final decisions ourselves. But when we stand in the judgment the help of friends and family will be of no use. We will stand or fall by what we have done, the decisions we have made in life, and the way we have stood by those decisions in time of temptation and trial. It would be a fine thing if we could be judged by what we did on Sundays during our life. Or it would be fine if we could be judged on the best ten years of our life. Some might wish to be judged on their words, but not their deeds; others on their words and deeds, but not their thoughts. But we will be judged according to the deeds done in the body, good or bad. (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

Exposition of the Text

I. Christian Liberty and Responsibility (Rom. 14: 10-12)

Why dost thou judge thy brother? The first nine verses of this chapter should be read and studied very carefully. It will be good to read a number of commentaries, if access can be had to them, and their explanations carefully compared with each other and with what is said in the text, that the student may arrive most nearly at the truth of the passage. It must be kept in mind that Paul is discussing *matters of indifference*, not *matters of faith*, in this chapter. The fact that he fought circumcision and kept it from being bound upon the Gentiles is proof that Paul does not teach in this chapter that we are to receive a brother with his false doctrines on matters of faith. This chapter has been used by denominational preachers to justify themselves in fellowshiping others regardless of what their religious belief and practices are. Paul said all who would not obey his teaching were to be dis-

fellowshipped. (2 Thess. 3: 6, 14.) We are to mark them that cause divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine. (Rom. 16: 17.) Surely Paul would not give such teaching as that, and then overturn it all by saying we are to receive a brother regardless of what he believes, teaches, and practices. In matters of faith, we have no liberty; in matters of indifference, as to whether we will or will not eat meat, esteem one day above another, etc., we have liberty, and each is bound to respect the other's position in such matters. This question, *Why dost thou judge thy brother?*, is asked of the brother who is weak in faith. (Verse 10.) By many this chapter is explained as giving the "weak brother" all the advantage and consolation. Certainly Paul protects the rights of the "weak brother," but he also teaches the weak brother not to judge the brother who "hath faith to eat all things."

Why dost thou set at nought thy brother? This question is asked of the one who has faith to eat all things—the strong in faith. The “weak in faith” was prone to condemn his brother for taking too great liberties; but the “strong in faith” was prone to despise, look upon with contempt, his weak brother who did not have an enlarged conception of the gospel and the liberties to be enjoyed by those who live by the gospel. Some think the “weak in faith” were the Jews, and the “strong in faith” were Gentiles who had not developed a conscience on such matters. But Paul does not make this distinction and classification. A Jew might be either weak or strong in faith on these matters; so might a Gentile. So it is best not to make such an explanation. It is a guess, and has a chance of being wrong.

We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. No one of us has the right to judge a brother on these matters of indifference; only God is our judge. For one to judge another in such matters is to usurp the place of God. But from this some conclude that we are not to judge anybody about anything at any time. They quote Jesus, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” (Matt. 7: 1.) They forget the same Lord said, “Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” (John 7: 24.) And Paul said, “Do not ye judge them that are within?” (1 Cor. 5: 12.) And Paul condemned the church at Corinth for not judging, but taking their differences before courts of the world for settlement. (1 Cor. 6: 1-8.) So there is a type of judgment which is wrong, and there is a kind which we must do. But in matters of indifference, things not in the realm of morals or religion, we are not to judge each other.

To me every knee shall bow. This is a quotation from Isa. 45: 23 which Paul cites to prove that all will stand before God in judgment, and that all will recognize his supreme authority in that day. The knee shall bow, and the tongue shall confess. These are two expressions which denote complete submission.

So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. It has been stressed already in this lesson

that each one must be judged individually. This is the most solemn thought that can engage the mind of man, unless it be that each one must live in such way as to determine whether he shall meet God in peace, or be doomed to spend eternity in hell. We do not have a choice as to whether we shall or shall not live in this world, but we do have a choice as to whether we shall meet God in peace. Meet him, we must; but we have a choice as to how we meet him.

II. Proper Regal'd for Brethren

(Rom. 14: 13-21)

That no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way. This is said to the “strong in faith.” He is persuaded that all meats are good for food; his conscience is not violated in eating them. Is he then at liberty to eat them, regardless of what effect it may have on his brother? Paul says if the exercise of his liberty hurts his brother, he will eat no more meat. (1 Cor. 8: 13.) How could one's action cause a brother to fall?

(1) By causing him to become discouraged and quit the church. (2) By causing him to do something which violates his conscience, and so sin against God. (Rom. 14: 23.) But this scripture, and others of like import, have been over-worked. They have been used by *objectors* to keep people from doing things the objectors say are displeasing to them. Two or three cranks in a church can make life miserable for the whole church if we must refrain from doing something just because it displeases them. They should be taught that they are not to judge others in their liberties, the same as the strong are to be taught not to lead people away from God by their liberties.

Nothing is unclean of itself. The word *nothing* is to be taken in a limited sense, as referring to the things under consideration, that is, meats. No meats are unclean. (Tim. 4: 4.) The word *unclean* is to be understood in the legal or ceremonial sense as determined by the law. The law of Moses made certain meats unclean, but that law has been taken out of the way.

Who accounteth anything unclean, to him it is unclean. “He that doubt-

eth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Verse 23.) Does one's opinion actually make the meat unclean? Certainly not. Nor does one's opinion that a thing is right make it right. The sin consists in violation of one's conscience, and not because he has done something actually wrong.

Thou walkest no longer in love.

If the strong has no regard for the scruples of the weak, he violates the law of love. Love of the brethren will cause us to deny ourselves of anything which will tend to destroy them.

Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. If by eating meat which I know is clean, I lead my brother to eat in violation of his conscience, I influence him to commit a sin which will cause him to be lost. This not only violates the law of love, but it destroys him for whom Christ died. This verse destroys the doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace." One for whom Christ died can be destroyed, or Paul was foolish to warn us against doing it. And this one which might be destroyed is a brother, so a child of God. Hence a child of God can so sin as to be lost eternally. The word translated destroy is used in Matt. 10: 28, "destroy both soul and body in hell." (See 1 Cor. 8: 11.)

Let not your good be evil spoken of. The word good here refers to the liberties of the strong in faith; things good in the realm of indifference. If we do these things to the hurt of the weak, they bring strife, contention, unkind remarks and criticism.

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. The kingdom here is the church. It does not consist of, nor is it maintained by, eating and drinking. These are not the important matters of the kingdom. We are not robbed of any principle of conscience when we refrain from eating meats for the sake of a weak brother. The growth or existence of the kingdom is no way affected by denying myself of these trivial matters.

But righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God consists of, and is promoted by, these things. Righteousness means

right living, "A faithful discharge of all the duties which we owe to God or to our fellow-men." Peace is not merely, or principally, the peace we have with God, but rather that peace among brethren. This is a characteristic of the kingdom, and of those who are citizens of the kingdom; and the welfare of the kingdom is promoted when brethren so order their lives as to live together in peace. Joy is the third characteristic of the kingdom. If we so walk as to offend our brethren, lead them to violate their consciences; or if we live in such way as to gender strife and contention, there can be little joy and satisfaction for any in the church.

Well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. The Christian who lives righteously, seeks peace in the church, and brings joy to all with whom he associates is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. Certainly God is pleased with such conduct, and men who would not approve of such conduct are unworthy of consideration. But it is true that the majority of men will approve of such a course. We are not to be considered primarily whether we are approved of men, but there is some satisfaction in knowing that our fellow men approve of us.

Let us follow after things that make for peace. "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men." (Rom. 12: 18.) Promoting peace by self-denial is worth more than promoting trouble by indulging in our liberties. Follow after peace; let peace be your goal; be more interested in the peace of the church than in your own satisfaction.

Things whereby we may edify one another. To edify means to build up, strengthen. We are to be more interested in building up a brother than in destroying him. To follow after these things means that we are to be active in doing so, striving with intention to do so.

Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. This is a repetition of verse 15, but under a different figure. The church is viewed as a house which we are not to "pull down" for the sake of enjoying our liberties. Or it may be that each individual is considered as a building. But either way, the building is of God. We ought not to destroy the work of God.

Evil for the man that eateth with offence. At first reading we might think this a repetition of verse 14. But verse 14 teaches that the weak brother sins when he eats thinking he is doing wrong. This verse teaches that all meats are clean to the strong in faith who knows his liberty, but eating meats when it causes the weak to stumble is evil. Eating is right in

itself, but it is evil if it causes a brother to stumble. In contrast with this Paul says it is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. We have this teaching both positively and negatively. It is evil to cause our brother to stumble; it is good not to do anything to make him stumble.

Topics for Discussion

1. The thought of being judged according to our thoughts, words, deeds, motives, and desires, by a God who sees and records all, is a sobering thought. If we would keep it constantly before our minds, surely we would be more careful about how we live.

2. To what extent should an objector be allowed to determine the program of church activities? Is it

better to save one objector and lose many souls, or to lose the objector and save many souls?

3. "Though a thing may be lawful, it is not always expedient. The use of the liberty which every Christian enjoys under the gospel, is to be regulated by the law of love; hence it is often morally wrong to do what, in itself considered, may be innocent." (Hodge.)

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What place did the individual have under the law? Under the gospel?

What parable of Jesus teaches individual responsibility?

What is the meaning of talents in that parable?

What is the consequence of refusing to accept responsibility?

What is taught about the individuality of judgment?

Golden Text Explained

What of the individual responsibility in becoming a Christian?

Why do parents have a great responsibility to become Christians?

What duty does each have with reference to his field of labor?

Why do people often minimize their ability?

Can people be lost for doing nothing?

Can we help each other to meet temptations?

What burden must each assume with reference to temptations?

When should we make up our minds as to what we will do in time of temptation?

What burden must each bear in the judgment?

Will we be judged on a part of our life?

Christian Liberty and Responsibility

What type of activity does Paul discuss in this chapter?

Does Paul teach us to allow any doctrine or practice rather than offend a brother?

Who is told not to judge his brother? What is meant by judging?

What does Paul say the strong brother is not to do to the weak?

Who is the weak brother? Who the strong?

Why have we no right to judge one another? Does this forbid all kinds of judging?

What two expressions in this connection denote complete submission to God?

How solemn is the thought of judgment to you? What about life before an all-seeing God?

Proper Regard For Brethren

Who is not to put a stumblingblock in his brother's way?

In what two ways may we cause a brother to fall?

If a brother is not tempted to sin on account of our liberty, does he have a right to object?

Is anything unclean? What is the meaning of unclean?

To whom is a thing unclean? Is it actually unclean?

How may we violate the law of brotherly love?

How may our good be evil spoken of?

The kingdom of God is not what? What is the meaning of this?

What is righteousness? What is the peace mentioned? What is the joy?

What course is well-pleasing to God and approved of men?

After what things are we to follow?

How may we overthrow the work of God?

What does this do to the doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace"?

Why does the weak brother sin when he eats meats?

Why does the strong in faith sin when he eats meats?

What course does Paul say he would follow in these matters?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson V—July 30, 1950

PREACHING THE CROSS

The Lesson Text

1 Cor. 1: 18-30

18 For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written,
I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.

22 Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gen'tiles foolishness;

24 But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the

power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:

27 But God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong;

28 And the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, *yea* and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are:

29. That no flesh should glory before God.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Je'-sus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world"* (Gal. 6: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gal. 6: 12-18.

Daily Bible Readings

July 24. M.....The Sower Soweth the Word (Mark 4: 10-20)
 July 25. T.....Preaching Christ Crucified (1 Cor. 2: 1-10)
 July 26. W.....We Preach Not Ourselves (2 Cor. 4: 1-15)
 July 27. T.....Reconciled to God Through the Cross (Eph. 2: 11-22)
 July 28. F.....Peace Through the Blood of His Cross (Col. 1: 18-29)
 July 29. S.....Jesus Suffered Without the Camp (Heb. 13: 7-17)
 July 30. S.....He Bore Our Sins Upon the Tree (1 Pet. 2: 21-25)

TIME.—A.D. 57.

PLACES.—Ephesus and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Corinth.

Introduction

It is agreed by all that Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote the letter to the church at Corinth, because he said, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." (1 Cor. 16: 8.) The two cities were not so far apart that Paul could not keep in touch with the church in Corinth, and know

something of the conditions which prevailed there. He received reports often, one such being through the household of Chloe. (1 Cor. 1: 11.) Another reference to reports received is made in 5: 1. It is also obvious from the letter that he had received a letter from the church asking ques-

tions about different matters over which they were having trouble. "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote." (1 Cor. 7: 1.) Notice a similar statement in 8: 1; 12: 1; 16: 1. It is generally conceded that this letter was written not long before Paul left Ephesus, perhaps in A.D. 57.

The city of Corinth was noted for its wealth, commerce, the "splendour and magnificence of its public buildings," its learning, religions, and immorality. Being on the trade route between Asia and the west, it was situated well for the gathering of all kinds of people with their various philosophies and religions. Statues were erected to Venus, the Sun, Neptune and Amphitrite, Diana, Apollo, Jupiter, Minerva, and others. "Public prostitution formed a considerable part of their religion; and they were accustomed in their public prayers to request the gods to multiply their prostitutes! and in order to express their gratitude to their deities for the favors they received, they bound themselves, by

vows, to increase the number of such women; for commerce with them was neither esteemed sinful nor disgraceful." (A. Clarke.) This will help us to understand why a young man could take his father's wife (1 Cor. 5: 1), and the church was not ashamed of it, but rather puffed up, proud, on account of it. Living in a city of this type, and accustomed to this kind of worship, we are not surprised that Paul said some of them used to be fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners. (1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.) And since some of them were such, and came from such environment, we need not be surprised that they were slow to learn to be Christians and that the church was torn by internal strife perhaps more than any other church which Paul established. But if the gospel of Christ can take hold in such soil, reform such lives and transform them into material fit for heaven, we need not fear its power to save people today.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Glory in the Cross.** Paul said that if any man had whereof to glory in the flesh, he had more. (Phil. 3: 4.) He had everything of which a Jew might be proud, but he gave them all up that he might gain Christ, and he was satisfied with the exchange. (Phil. 3: 7, 8.) And then after he became a Christian, he had every reason from a human viewpoint to be proud. He was an apostle. The Lord made a special appearance to him and gave him a special call. He had revelations made to him beyond that which ordinary men received. (2 Cor. 12: 7.) He had all the authority the Lord ever gave any apostle, and he had labored more abundantly than they all. Yet he refused to glory in these things. He preferred to glory in the cross. It was an instrument of shame, ignominy, sorrow, suffering, and death, not only to the victim who was nailed to it, but to them who believed in him and proclaimed him as the Saviour of the world. Paul was justified in glorying in the cross because

(1) It was the greatest exhibition of divine love this world has ever

known; (2) A most marvelous exhibition of divine righteousness, in which satisfaction was made for our sins; (3) A most wonderful exhibition of divine power, God overcoming and binding Satan; and (4) A marvelous exhibition of divine wisdom in which God chose a despised instrument to win the hearts of his enemies. From that cross flow streams of pardoning love; consolation and encouragement in our trials in this life; and hope for a life with Jesus beyond the grave. Around that cross we sit in silent wonder at its power to transform enemies into martyrs, to purify the polluted, and to give strength to the weak and faltering.

2. **Separation from the World.** Death by crucifixion was shameful and ignominious; it was the world's way of expressing supreme contempt, of rendering a person most odious. So when Paul says that in the cross of Christ the world had been crucified to him, he meant that the world came to be odious to him. He cannot mean the material world from which we gain our sustenance, but

that which is sinful, or which leads to sin; that which wars against our holy desires and aspirations. John tells us not to love the world. (1 John 2: 15.) It is that world which was crucified to Paul. By this he means that the world which we are not to love became an object to detest, to abhor; and through this means we are separated from the world. It was that world which hated Jesus, which made his death necessary, and which still opposes him and his program of salvation among men. For these reasons we ought to hate the world; we ought to see that it is crucified unto us, made an object of contempt.

But Paul says he was crucified unto

the world. He became an object of contempt to the world because he gloried in the cross, because he looked to the cross for salvation, and because he gained hope, strength, and courage from that cross. The Jew despised him for it because it was contrary to his expectation of what the Messiah should be and do. The Greek despised him because glorying in the cross was the height of foolishness. There was nothing in the cross which resembled a great system of philosophy, and so to the Greek there could not possibly be anything good in it. Hence there was complete separation from the world because he was crucified to the world, and the world was crucified unto him.

Exposition of the Text

I. God's Power Versus Man's Wisdom

(1 Cor. 1: 18-25)

The word of the cross. This means the word concerning the cross, or the death of Jesus which took place on the cross. The death of Jesus is the central theme of the gospel. The cross stands for his death, so the preaching of the cross means preaching Jesus as the one who died for our sins.

Is to them that perish foolishness. To the wise philosophers of the world it is foolish to talk about salvation from sin coming through the story of a man's death. They think Jesus was a mere man. They think it is foolish to say that salvation comes to us through the death of Jesus, as it would be to say that salvation could come through the death of any other good man. And the fact that he came from Nazareth made it more difficult for the Jews to have faith in him, since no good thing could come from Nazareth. (John 1: 46.)

Unto us who are saved, it is the power of God. The gospel is the power of God to save the believer, not the unbeliever. God has no way to save the unbeliever. In the gospel there are facts to be believed, commandments to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed. But the promises cannot be enjoyed unless and until we believe the gospel. Paul said it is by this gospel he preached that they were saved. (1 Cor. 15: 1, 2.) It is not only God's power to save from the service of

Satan, but it is able to build us up, transform us into the likeness of Christ. Its converting and sanctifying power has been demonstrated so many times through the centuries that all men ought to be willing to acknowledge it by this time.

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. No time is set for this destruction, and some are bothered that the wise are allowed to continue their opposition to the gospel. But in God's good time and in his own way, he will bring destruction. But there is a sense in which he is doing that now. He has chosen to save man by a simple way, contrary to the wisdom of the wise, thus bringing to nought, or setting aside their wisdom as useless. Man has never been able to direct his steps, and yet he has never been humble enough to admit his inability. (Jer. 10: 23; 8: 9.) It is only when he admits this inability, and looks humbly to God for direction that he can be saved. And every time this is done, God has destroyed the wisdom of the wise in that individual.

Where is the wise? the scribe? the disputer? This word wise refers to those who had worldly wisdom, perhaps the Greek philosophers. The word scribe refers to the Jewish lawyer, one who had specialized in transcribing and teaching the law of Moses. The word disputer refers to that class of scholars, perhaps Epicureans and Stoics, who sought for "allegorical, mystical, and cabalistic-

cal senses from the holy scriptures." They were not satisfied to take scripture for what it said, but had to give it some mystical meaning. But God has made all this to appear foolish because he has not used it in his plan to save the world from sin.

World through its wisdom knew not God. All the philosophies of men have never been able to come to a knowledge of God. They never knew the attributes of God; they could never learn the nature of God; they could never learn the mind of God; nor could they find the way to God. The learned of our day are just as helpless until they turn from their systems of philosophy and come to the Bible hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. It is not through foolish preaching that God saves, but it is through the preaching of what the world calls foolishness that God saves. The apostles preached Christ crucified; the world said that is foolishness. Paul replied, God wills to save people through this foolishness. But again, God plans to save only those who believe. Man has his choice to believe or disbelieve, to accept or reject; and his salvation depends on what he does with the gospel.

The Jews seek after signs. The first covenant was brought in with signs on Sinai, and the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night were signs to them. They expected the Messiah to be a temporal king, and work signs and miracles to subdue the nations. Jesus did not meet their expectations along this line, so they rejected him.

Greeks seek after wisdom. Like the men of Athens who spent their time in doing nothing but hearing or telling some new thing. (Acts 17: 21.) Before they would place their trust in one he must produce a great and wise system of philosophy. The gospel was too simple.

We preach Christ crucified. Nothing could have been more contrary to Jewish expectation than a weak character who would submit to trial and condemnation and crucifixion by the Romans. If he had broken the Homan power and set up a kingdom on earth, they would have accepted

him. Christ crucified to save from sin did not make sense to the Greek, so he rejected Paul's preaching. Crucifixion was not only a means of putting one out of the way, but it showed the contempt people had for the victim. If a man were to so outrage our sense of right that he should be hanged and his nude body dragged through the streets, we would see in that a manifestation of supreme contempt for the man. Crucifixion meant all that and more. How could the apostles expect people to have respect for a crucified man, much less put their faith in him to save them from sin, when he so outraged his own people that they crucified him.

The foolishness of God is wiser than men. The words *foolishness of God* are not to convey the idea that God is foolish; but that in God which men call foolishness. The fact that God will save the world by preaching Christ crucified, though foolish to men, is a wise and effective method of salvation. The philosophies of men have saved a soul, but Christ crucified has saved millions, and hence the truth of Paul's statement attested.

II. Wise and Mighty Put to Shame (1 Cor. 1: 26-31)

Not many wise, mighty, or noble called. The word *wise* here is the same as in verse 20, and refers to those who put their trust in the wisdom of men. The word *mighty* means those "distinguished for rank, authority, influence." And the word *noble* means "well-born, of high rank." These words suggest the learned, those who exercise power through wealth and political rank, and those in high social circles. These are the people who control world affairs. But Paul noticed that not many of them were among the saved at Corinth. The gospel call is to all. The call has gone to them, but they have rejected it. Parents want their children to make their mark in the world. This is a foolish ambition. How many governors, senators, presidents have been Christians?

God chose the foolish things. This has always been true. God led a poor unarmed and undisciplined people out of Egypt and overthrew sev-

eral nations in Canaan. Jesus came into the world to establish a kingdom, but he came in poverty, to an unknown family, who lived in a despised city. He chose unlearned fishermen to be his executives, and instead of giving them a message that would appeal to people, he told them to go out and preach that he had been crucified to save people from sin. He would overthrow the kingdoms of men, yet he raised no army. He said my words shall judge you in the last day, yet he never wrote a word except on the shifting sands. (John 5: 8.) The things God chose looked weak in the eyes of the world; they were despised, for the purposes for which God chose them, in the eyes of the world. But with these weak and base things God has accomplished a work which the wise, mighty, and noble have never been able to accomplish.

The things that are not. Clarke thinks this means Gentiles, who at one time were not a people in the eyes of the Jews. The Gentiles had conquered the Jews and now governed them, and would soon destroy their city and temple, and their religion. But perhaps it includes the outcasts of society whom the great and learned treated as if they did not exist. Through them God brings to nought the things that are, things that seem to be worthwhile and lasting in the eyes of the great.

That no flesh should glory before God. If God had selected the wise and mighty through whom to work, they would have taken all the glory to themselves. If God were to give us means which the world thinks fitted to accomplish his purposes, we would lose sight of God and attribute our success to ourselves, to the means we use. But since we save souls by preaching Christ crucified, we know there is no scientific connection between the means used and the results obtained, so we give the glory to God.

Who was made unto us the wisdom from God. In Jesus Christ God manifested his wisdom. The works

of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, the death of Jesus to save man, the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension to glory to be our high priest, are all manifestations of God's wisdom. They do not appear wise to men, but God's ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts are higher than our thoughts. (Isa. 55: 9.) Only when man learns the folly of trusting man's wisdom, and accepts Jesus as the wisdom from God, can he be saved from his sin.

Righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. The construction here requires us to say that Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, etc. He is our righteousness. (Jer. 23: 6; 33: 16.) We are the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5: 21.) Righteousness here refers to our justification, or being accepted as righteous in the sight of God. Paul is saying that we have nothing about which to glory. Even our justification is not on account of any good we have done, or any wisdom we have shown; but it is on account of what Jesus has done for us that we are righteous before God. Sanctification is the process of conversion continued until we have become like Jesus, a holy person. And this must be taken in the relative sense; we can not be holy in the absolute. But our sanctification is not to be realized by our wisdom and strength; it is on account of our relationship to Christ. And the redemption which we have already enjoyed, and that eternal redemption to which we look all is on account of our connection with Jesus.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. This is the climax to which Paul has been driving in these last few verses. All our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption are not of our wisdom or strength, or goodness. If these things could have been attained by man, the wise, mighty, and noble of the earth would have attained them long ago. But these can be had only in Christ, therefore let us glory in the Lord, not in ourselves.

Topics for Discussion

1. Why should people in Christ strive to be like the world in any sense? Why live by the standards of

the world? Why walk after the course of the world? The world has always been out of harmony with God

and truth. Look to God, not to the world, for direction.

2. If God could use the weak and base things of the world for the accomplishment of his purposes, why doubt that he can use us to do all he wants done in the world in this generation? If we but lend ourselves to

him as we should, he can get his work done through us.

3. "Jesus is all the world to me" should be the feeling in our hearts and the song on our lips. But can he be all the world to us unless we are willing to devote our all to him?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

From what city did Paul write this letter we are studying?

What is the date of the writing of this letter?

How did Paul know of conditions in the church at Corinth?

For what was the city of Corinth noted?

What do you know of the moral standards of Corinth?

From what class of people did most of the church members there come?

What light does this throw on the growth and progress of the church?

How does Paul's success in Corinth encourage us in our work in wicked cities?

Golden Text Explained

From the human point of view what did Paul have whereof to glory?

Give and discuss four reasons why we may glory in the cross of Christ.

Of what was the cross an emblem? Of what is it the emblem today?

What world was crucified unto Paul?

What is meant by the world being crucified unto him?

What is meant by Paul being crucified unto the world?

Why would the Jew despise Paul for glorying in the cross? Why would the Greek?

God's Power Versus Man's Wisdom

What is meant by the word of the cross?

To whom is this word foolishness?

What is the word of the cross to us who are saved?

How is the wisdom of the wise destroyed?

Who is the wise, the scribe, the disputer?

How can the world come to know God?

How does God choose to save the world?

For what did Jews seek? For what did Greeks seek?

What did Paul preach to save the world?

Why was the gospel of the cross offensive to men?

What is meant by the foolishness of God being wiser than men?

Wise and Mighty Put to Shame

What is the meaning of wise, mighty, noble?

How many are called, and how?

What is the station in life of those generally who accept the call?

Show how God chose foolish things to accomplish his purpose?

What is meant by the things which are not?

Why did God choose these foolish things to accomplish his ends?

What is meant by Jesus being the wisdom of God?

Explain why Jesus is our righteousness.

What is the meaning of the word sanctification? Why is he called our sanctification?

Why is he called our redemption?

In whom are we to glory, and why?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VI—August 6, 1950

THE EVILS OF DIVISION

The Lesson Text

1 Cor. 3: 3-15

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?

4 For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of A-pol'-los; are ye not men?

5 What then is A-qóΓ-los? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him.

6 I planted, A-qóΓ-los watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.

9 For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation;

and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Je'-sus Christ.

12 But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble:

13 Each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it,

because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.

Golden Text.—*"Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing."* (1 Cor. 1: 10a.)

Devotional Reading.—John 17: 20-25.

Daily Bible Readings

July 31.	M. God Hates Sowing of Discord (Prov. 6: 12-19)
August 1. T.....	Contentious Man Inflames Strife (Prov. 26: 20-28)
August 2. W.....	Divided Kingdom Cannot Stand (Matt. 12: 22-30)
August 3. T.....	Type of Division Justified (Matt. 10: 34-39)
August 4.	F. Division a Work of the Flesh (Gal. 5: 16-21)
August 5.	S. False Doctrines Cause Strife (1 Tim. 6: 3-10)
August 6. S.....	Foolish Questions Gender Strife (2 Tim. 3: 14-26)

TIME.—A.D. 57.

PLACES.—Ephesus and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Corinth.

Introduction

The divisions at Corinth, and nearly every place where Paul labored, were the result of a number of very natural causes. Paul had enemies both in and out of the church. This opposition was caused by his teaching with reference to circumcision. For a long time the Judaizers claimed that Gentile converts had to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. (Acts 15: 1.) But after the council at Jerusalem, they had to change their arguments and their tactics. "They taught that the uncircumcised were in a lower condition as to spiritual privileges, and at a greater distance from God; and that only the circumcised converts were in a state of full acceptance with him: in short, they kept the Gentile converts who would not submit to circumcision on the same footing as the *proselytes of the gate*, and treated the circumcised alone as *proselytes of righteousness*" (Conybeare and Howson.) It is thought that the most rabid of these parties that opposed Paul were those who said they were of Christ. (1 Cor. 1: 12.) It is believed they

stressed the fact that Paul did not even see the Lord while he was on earth; that they had seen him, were intimately associated with the apostles and James (Gal. 2: 12), and for these reasons were better qualified than Paul to know what Jesus taught. The other party opposing Paul said they were of Cephas. (1 Cor. 1: 12.) Though Peter did not stand with them in the Jerusalem conference, he did stand with them in Antioch. (Gal. 2: 11ff.) It is possible that many of these enemies of Paul were in some measure sincere, thinking that many Jews would accept Jesus as the Messiah were it not for such teaching as Paul was doing. They wished to keep the rites and ceremonies of Judaism, but accept Jesus as Messiah; and no doubt many Jews would have responded to such a perverted gospel. And one of the great evils wrought by this division and consequent fighting was that many Jews were given some grounds to hope that their rights and ceremonies could be preserved, and so were encouraged to hold to them; and on the other hand many Gentiles were

kept out of the church thinking the Judaizers might win the fight and they would find themselves inferior

to the Jews in the church and in no better condition than they would have been as proselytes to Judaism.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Evils of Division.** We should notice the appeal of Paul to these brethren who were divided. He says, "I beseech you through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." This earnest appeal suggests the importance of the matter under consideration. Had division not been so great an evil, Paul would not have appealed to them in the name of Jesus Christ. The fact that he appeals to them through Jesus as Lord adds to the weight of his appeal. Being their Lord, the one to whom they must answer in the judgment, they should respond to the appeal that they might meet their Lord in peace. That division is evil, and very evil, is seen because it keeps our Lord's prayer for unity from being answered; division prevents the accomplishment of the desire and purpose of Christ. (John 17.) Next, division makes unbelievers, and keeps them from accepting Jesus as the Son of God. (John 17: 21.) Again, division causes the church to be weak when otherwise it would be strong to do its work. There are many communities where division forces brethren to build two houses of worship and keep up overhead expenses of two congregations where the membership and the size of the community demand but one. If they were not divided, the extra expense could be used to take the gospel to people who have never heard. But it also weakens the influences of the church in the home community. People do not care to become members of the church when it is divided. They do not wish to become parties to division. Next, division fosters unkind and unchristian feelings in the hearts of all involved. It is difficult for those who are in the right to maintain the proper spirit, and many times they sin in their efforts to stand for right. And those who are in the wrong often scheme in unholy fashion to out-manuever the other side to win their objective. All this is observed by the people of the

community, so the church and its head, Jesus Christ, are put to shame. Again, many times divisions are not over matters of faith, but over trivial affairs; and so anxious are we to carry our point that we make these trivial matters of great importance, while we forget the real weighty matters. So the people around us get a poor conception of Christianity.

2. **Cure for Divisions.** Paul begs us to "speak the same thing." How can this put an end to divisions? People often encourage the preaching of different doctrines, and the formation of many denominations; but they plead for tolerance, each accepting the other without regard for what he is teaching or practicing. This is not *unity*, though it may be *union*. What we believe and teach determines our life, unless we are hypocrites. So if we speak the same thing, we will live alike, if we all practice what we preach. So if all will speak the same thing, and all will practice what they preach, we will all be living and worshipping alike. That will be genuine unity. But how can we all speak the same thing? We differ so much in education, parental background, home and business environments, and many other ways, that it seems impossible that we should all arrive at a common understanding which will allow us to speak the same thing. But Peter gives us a rule which will solve the matter. "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God." (1 Pet. 4: 11.) If the learned will say nothing more than is contained in the words of inspiration, and if the ignorant will express himself in the language of inspiration, all will speak the same thing. It is true one may not see as much in the words as another, but if neither puts things into those words which are not clearly and manifestly included, the one who sees more will see nothing contradictory to what the unlearned sees. Hence there will be unity, and still allowance for growth for all.

THIRD QUARTER

AUGUST 6, 1950

we may wear the name of God who is all?

He that planteth and he that watereth are one. Paul does not mean the same person did both, for he says he planted and Apollos watered. But they are one in work. Paul planted for the salvation of man and the glory of God; Apollos watered for the same purposes. God and Christ are one, yet they are not identical persons. Husband and wife are one, yet they are two persons. And these workers will each receive his reward on the basis of the work he has done; it will be according to his labor.

We are God's fellow - workers. Whether Paul meant to say that we and God work together, or that we work together under God, is not certain. The language may be interpreted either way. But since Paul is exalting God and minimizing man's place as compared to that of God, it is best to say he means we work together under God. Paul and Apollos were fellow-workers, and both depended upon God for direction and increase.

Ye are God's husbandry. This word husbandry means a tilled field. The church is God's field. Paul and Apollos merely worked in that field.

God's building. God is the builder; Paul and Apollos were carpenters on the job. The great architect and builder deserves all the praise, not the workmen.

II. Builders and Their Reward (1

Cor. 3: 10-15)

According to the grace of God. Paul was very humble, and always willing to give God the praise and credit for all that he did. It was through God's favor that he was saved, that he was called to the apostleship, and that he had been preserved to perform such labors. We should be humble enough to give credit to God, and mindful of his goodness to us.

As a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation. The word wise is used in the sense of skilful. The word masterbuilder from a word which means architect. It is not used to denote any superiority of Paul over others, but as the one who did the first work. Laying the foundation is

the first thing to do, and then the structure is raised upon it. He had done his work well; he had used skill in doing his part of the work.

Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. This is perhaps intended as a warning to Paul's enemies. They are to take heed, be careful, that they use the same skill he had used; they were to be as faithful to God in raising the superstructure as he had been in laying the foundation. The foundation may be cheapened by rearing light cheap building on it. Paul reminds them that his work was enduring and would carry an enduring building.

Other foundation can no man lay. Paul does not mean to say that it is impossible for a man to lay any other foundation, for certainly many are laying foundations of sand, and many are building thereon. (Matt. 7: 24-27.) But no man can preach the truth, please God, and have an enduring work if he lays any other foundation than that which Paul laid, which is Jesus Christ. He is the tried foundation. (Isa. 28: 16.) He is the chief cornerstone; he 'is the head of the corner which the builders rejected. (1 Pet. 2: 6, 7.) This foundation was laid by preaching Christ as Son of God, Saviour of men, and all other truths concerning his person and work. To pervert, the teaching would be to lay a foundation of sand.

Gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble. Whether Paul has in mind one house with a mixture of enduring material and that which will not endure; or whether he has in mind two separate houses, one of enduring material and the other of perishable material is hard to determine. This writer prefers to believe the former is more in harmony with the context. The builder is one who preaches or teaches the gospel. The material he places on the foundation is composed of the people he converts, or to whose conversions he contributes. Many think the material is composed of the matter taught. If false doctrines are taught, the builder will lose his reward, but he shall be saved. This contradicts other plain passages (Gal. 1: 6-9), hence it must be rejected. Some see a parallel between this and the parable

of the sower. (Matt. 13.) The wood, hay, and stubble are like the thorny ground, stony ground, and the way-side hearers, in that order. And the gold, silver and precious stones are like the good ground some thirty, some sixty and some one hundred-fold. There is a similarity if not a parallel.

Each man's work shall be made manifest. Here again people differ in the meaning of Paul's teaching. Some think the work will be manifest here to the shame of the builder, while others think it will be manifest in the day of judgment. The fact that it is to be revealed by fire should settle the argument, unless the fire is given a figurative meaning. Since there is no necessity for that, it seems best to say that the day spoken of is the day of judgment, and the fire is that which shall destroy all work which is not acceptable to God. Gold, silver and precious stone will endure; wood, hay, and stubble will perish. People having qualities suggested by these types of building material are built upon the foundation. When the judgment comes they will endure or perish, and the builders' work is made manifest.

If a man's work abide. Those who build well, though sometimes slowly, will receive a reward. It is for this

reason that we are to take heed how we build on the foundation.

If a man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss. If those we have converted, or brought into the church, built upon the foundation, prove to be not enduring material, the workman will suffer loss in that he has no reward for that labor. Paul was afraid he had bestowed labor on the Galatians in vain. (Gal. 4: 11.) He felt sure he would have something whereof to glory in the day of Christ, judgment day, rather than regret that he had labored in vain, with respect to the church at Philippi. (Phil. 2: 16.)

He himself shall be saved. One may lose his reward, but he himself be saved. From this we are forced to conclude that eternal salvation, or eternal life, is one thing, and the reward we receive for our labors is another. We are rewarded according to our labors, but eternal life is a gift to all who meet the Lord's approval. "If the disciples of any teacher shall, in time of persecution, fall away through the want of proper instruction, he will lose his reward: he himself, however, having in general acted sincerely, shall be saved; yet, with much difficulty, as one is saved, who runs through a fire." (Mac-knight.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Strife and division are of the devil, and churches which allow such to come will suffer. However we cannot pay any price for peace. If false teachers come, they must be silenced. If they draw away disciples after them, we must prefer division to digression.

2. A good foundation is indispensable. Good buildings crumble when put on faulty foundations. But mean shoddy buildings on good foundations

are little better. They invite criticism and ridicule. The church suffers when poor material is put on the true foundation.

3. Each should examine himself now to determine what type of material he is. If the examination is made here, we will have time to make a change if necessary; but if we wait until the judgment to learn, we will have no time to make needed changes.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What were the positions of Judaizers before and after the Jerusalem conference?

Who were Paul's most rabid opponents at Corinth?

What right did the Cephasites have to think Peter was on their side?

How did these divisions affect the Jews?

What possible effect did these divisions have on Gentiles?

Golden Text Explained

What earnest appeal did Paul make of the brethren at Corinth?

How does division prevent the Lord's prayer from being answered?

Show how division weakens the church.

Show how division causes people to have sinful attitudes towards each other.

Show how division causes trivial matters to be magnified out of due proportion.

What is the difference between unity and union?
 What is the cure for division?
 How can we all speak the same thing on religious matters?

Work and Place of Ministers

With what did Paul charge the church at Corinth?
 What is suggested by the word jealousy in our text?
 What portion of the church composed the party of Paul, and Apollos?
 What is meant by the word minister in our text?
 What shows the dependence of the minister upon God?
 What is meant by planting and watering?
 Explain how God gives the increase.
 How did Paul use this to show people they should not wear the names of men?
 In what way are the planter and waterer one?
 What is meant by being God's fellow-workers?
 What lesson does Paul teach by calling the church God's husbandry?

What is the lesson taught by calling it God's building?

Builders and Their Reward

What had Paul received by the grace of God?
 What is the meaning of the word master-builder?
 How had Paul laid the foundation in Corinth?
 What warning did Paul give later builders?
 What was the foundation laid by Paul?
 Is it possible to lay another?
 How many kinds of building material does Paul mention?
 Do these types of material refer to people, or to doctrines taught?
 What test must each man's work be subjected to?
 Who will be rewarded? Who will suffer loss?
 How may one's labor in preaching the gospel be spent in vain?
 How can one lose his reward and still be saved?
 What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VII—August 13, 1950

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lesson Text

1 Cor. 11: 23-34

23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Je'sus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread;

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man prove himself, and

so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.

30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

31 But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another.

34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come"* (1 Cor. 11: 26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 26: 20-28.

Daily Bible Readings

August 7. M.	Matthew's Record of Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:	26-30)
August 8. T.	Mark's Account of the Supper (Mark 14:	17-26)
August 9. W.	Luke's Account of the Supper (Luke 22:	14-23)
August 10. T.	The Saved Broke Bread in Worship (Acts 2:	37-47)

August 11. F. Broke Bread the First Day of the Week (Acts 20: 7-12)
 August 12. S. Communion of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 10: 14-22)
 August 13. S.Should Not Forsake the Assembly (Heb. 10: 19-25)

TIME.—A.D. 57.

PLACES.—Ephesus and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Corinth.

Introduction

All institutions have memorials. A memorial is something by which the memory of a person or event is perpetuated. It may be a monument erected to preserve the memory of a man, such as Washington whose monument stands in the nation's capitol city, or it may be a day set aside for special services of commemoration in honor of the man or event. The Passover feast was commemorative. It preserved the memory of the death angel passing over the first born of the Israelites when all other first born in Egypt were slain. (Ex. 12.) Again, when Esther had saved her people from destruction under Haman, during the reign of Ahasuerus, two days in the month of Adar were set as a day of rejoicing in remembrance of that salvation. This the Jews call the feast of Purim. (Esther 9: 17-28.) They celebrate it by "feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor."

The Lord's supper is commemorative in its nature, and as such, it will be expected to consist of such materials as will cause us to recall the person and events which we are to remember. Jesus could have raised a monument in Jerusalem, and could have required all his followers to make a pilgrimage once or more during life. But there are so many reasons why this would not have been wise or desirable. Monuments decay; they are not accessible to all, and it would be impossible for some poor people to go. So he chose that which is a fit emblem—bread as his body, and grape juice as his blood—and within the reach of all men regardless of where they live. T. B. Larimore, in his matchless manner, said "When I see the abundance of rich juicy grapes that grow in Tennessee, on mountain high, in valley low, in field and forest, in garden and grove, on vineclad hills, by babbling brooks, on sunny slopes, in shady nooks, I thank the Lord, take

courage, and say: 'While time shall last, the saints and faithful in Tennessee can commemorate the death of Christ in his appointed way.'

"When I go to Canada, find grapes growing everywhere, and find them so abundant and so cheap that I almost wonder how people can afford to gather them and market them for the price, I say: 'Canada is the home of the grape.'

"When I travel towards the tropics, from Canada to Cuba, and see great clusters of luscious grapes growing on the bosom of the beautiful island that has been bathed in the blood of its patriots and people, I say: 'The Southland is grapeland, and so shall it be forever.'

When I wander westward till I reach the Golden Slope, where the breath of the Pacific before me meets the breath of the Rockies behind me, and I behold a world of grapes so wonderful that I can scarcely believe the vision is real, I exclaim: 'I've found the land of grapes at last!'

"But as I stand there on California's broad beautiful bosom, surrounded by fruits and flowers that never fail, breathing the breath of summer in sight of spotless snows that never melt, my mind flits away to Switzerland and France, and I confess that even California has no monopoly on the grape.

"Then when I close my eyes and cease to see the scenes about me, and cease to think of the scenes that have surrounded me, and fix my mind on men of the long ago who in Palestine cut a cluster of grapes from the vine on which it grew, put it on a pole, and carried it—two of them—one end of the pole on the shoulder of each man, as they marched back toward the wilderness to show their weary, wandering brethren a sample of the fruit of that goodly land, I say: 'Surely the promised land is the land of grapes, as well as milk and honey.'

Golden Text Explained

1. **The Emblems.** Bread is the emblem of the body of Jesus. Catholics hold to the idea that when blessed it turns into the literal body of Jesus. But after Jesus had blessed it and broken it, it was still bread, and Paul says we partake of one bread. (1 Cor. 10: 17.) It could not have been turned into his literal body, for he was holding the bread in his hand. To say that the bread is the literal body of Jesus, and then eat that body, is to go one step farther into heathenism than even the heathen will go. "The Egyptians' saith Origen, 'think a brute creature to be God, and therefore they abstain from eating flesh as they do from death.'" (Elliot on Romanism, Vol. 1, p. 255.) "The Mohammedans declare that by thus eating of Christ's flesh the Christians treat him worse than the Jews, because it is more savage to eat his flesh and drink his blood than only to procure his death." (Ibid.) The fruit of the vine is another emblem in the supper, and it represents the blood of Jesus. He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," meaning, the new covenant is sealed, ratified, or sanctioned by his blood. Animals were killed, their blood shed, in the making of covenants, agreements, to signify the consequence of either party breaking the covenant. The covenant breaker was subject to death for his unfaithfulness. So the blood of Jesus assures us of the faithfulness of God in keeping his covenant with us. If we become unfaithful to our agreement to keep

ourselves from sin and to live unto him, we become covenant breakers, count the blood of the covenant whereby we were sanctified an unholy thing, and we will suffer a death worse than merciless. (Heb. 10: 26-31.)

2. **Proclaim His Death.** By keeping the supper we proclaim (1) the fact of his death on the cross; (2) the purpose of his death on the cross, that we might be saved from our sins. We had sinned, were sentenced and awaiting the execution, but he took our place and made satisfaction for our sins, so that now God can forgive us without being unjust. (3) We proclaim our belief in, and acceptance of, his death as the penalty which we should have suffered, and we thus offer our Saviour to the world for their acceptance.

3. **Till He Come.** Since the supper is to be eaten in the kingdom (Luke 22: 29, 30), and since the supper has been observed since Pentecost (Acts 2: 42), we conclude that the kingdom has been in existence since Pentecost. Since the supper is to be eaten in the kingdom, and since it is to be observed till he comes again, we conclude that the kingdom will last until his second coming. We must also conclude from these premises that Jesus is not coming the second time for the purpose of establishing his kingdom. We may also conclude that we will not observe the supper after his coming, seeing we eat it *till he come*.

Exposition of the Text

I. Institution Recalled (1 Cor. 11: 23-26)

For I received of the Lord. Paul did not get his information about the Lord's supper from the other apostles, but directly from the Lord by inspiration.

The night in which he was betrayed. Jesus knew at the institution of the supper that he would be betrayed later in the night. If he had been an impostor, would he have wished to perpetuate his shame by instituting a memorial? If he did not rise from the dead and the disciples were disappointed and made ashamed

of their connection with him, would they have instituted a memorial to remind them all their lives of their disappointment? Jesus not only knew he would be betrayed and crucified, but he knew his Father would vindicate him by raising him from the dead. He wished his death to be remembered, so he instituted the supper beforehand to increase our faith in him as well as to remember his death for us.

When he had given thanks. Some are bothered when they read that Jesus *blessed* the bread. (Matt. 26: 26.) Often brethren say, We cannot

bless the bread as did Jesus, but we can give thanks. Luke says Jesus gave thanks for the bread. (22: 19.) Matthew says he blessed the bread, but that he gave thanks for the cup. (26: 26, 27.) We have the same variation in two accounts of Jesus giving thanks for food. (John 6: 11; Luke 9: 16.) Thayer says when the two words are used, one refers rather to the form, the other to the substance of thanksgiving. (Greek Lexicon, p. 259.)

This is my body which is for you. The bread was a small unleavened loaf, common bread which the Jews used in the passover meal. Holding the bread, Jesus said, "This is my body." He certainly did not mean that it was his literal physical body, for that was visible to the disciples. Hence we must conclude that he meant it was a symbol, a representative. Scripture abounds with similar expressions. "The seven good kine are seven years." (Gen. 41: 26.) Daniel told the king he was the head of gold. (Dan. 2: 38.) The rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10: 4) Jesus said, I am the vine and ye are the branches (John 15); and, I am the door. Does any one think Jesus was actually, literally a vine, and that we, when converted to him, become literal branches of a literal vine? So the bread is his body, but not his literal body.

In like manner also the cup. The cup was taken and offered with the same ceremonies, and for the same purpose. While Catholics miss the point on the bread and fruit of the vine becoming the literal flesh of Jesus, many sincere people miss the point on the word cup about as bad, and think this means a congregation, regardless of their number, must drink from one literal container. Paul speaks of "The cup of blessing which we bless" as the "communion of the blood of Christ." (1 Cor. 10: 16.) Paul was in Ephesus and writing to the church at Corinth, yet he spoke of *the cup* which *we* bless. They not only blessed one cup, but they drank what they blessed. If they blessed the literal cup, they drank the literal cup.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood. The word cup here cannot refer to the literal container, for

that was not the new covenant in his blood. The container stood for the contents. When we say, The kettle boils, we put the container for the contents. The container drops out of sight, and takes no part in the action expressed in the verb. So when Jesus blessed the cup, the container is put for the contents, and the action of the verb is not spent upon the container at all. They drank the cup, not the container; the action of the verb is spent upon the contents which are in the place of the container.

As often as ye drink it. Some are confused by the fact that neither the Lord when he instituted the supper, nor Paul on this occasion, tells us how often to take the supper. We read that the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread. (Acts 20: 7.) The first day of the week is the time set. We keep annual feasts annually; monthly feasts monthly; and we keep weekly feasts weekly. We celebrate our independence on the fourth of July. No one ever asked, The fourth of what July? As often as the date comes, we do that which is to be done on the date. The bill collector comes on the first of the month. No bill collector ever asked, The first of what month? So we celebrate, commemorate, the death of the Lord as often as the first day of the week comes around.

II. Manner of Observance (1 Cor 11: 27-34)

Whosoever shall eat, or drink in an unworthy manner. Some have thought this refers to the condition of the person partaking of the supper rather than the manner in which it is taken. Instead of the word "unworthily" this version has *unworthy manner*, making this mistake wholly unjustified, even among the most untaught. These Corinthians had been used to heathen feasts eaten in honor of their gods, in which they ate and drank to their fill. It was not difficult for them to think the Lord's supper was such a meal, and that it might be entered into with all the irreverence characteristic of heathen feasts. But such a manner of observance is wholly out of order, and

contrary to the nature and purposes of Christianity.

Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. By observing the supper in an unworthy manner, we become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. That is, we stand exposed to the same guilt and punishment for that irreverence as those who actually crucified Jesus stood exposed. Those who would willfully show disrespect for the emblems of the Lord's body, would be among the number to shout for his crucifixion if they had lived in his day. Those who would not willfully show disrespect, but go along in ignorance with those who do, would be among the number who would not actually crucify the Lord, but in ignorance and indifference go along with those who do the work. Jesus condemned the lawyers of his day in a similar way. He told them their fathers killed the prophets, and they built their tombs. (Luke 11: 48.) By building their tombs they went through the form of honoring the prophets, but Jesus knew their hearts and said they were as guilty of disrespect for the prophets as were their fathers, and were as guilty of the blood of the prophets. It is therefore a serious matter for us to go through the form of observing the Lord's supper. We should approach it with great solemnity and reverence, with a prayer that we may do so in a worthy manner.

Let a man prove himself. The word prove has the sense of *examine*. "First, whether he comes to this service to keep up the memory of Christ. Secondly, whether he is moved to do so by a grateful sense of Christ's love in dying for men. Thirdly, whether he comes with a firm purpose of doing honor to Christ, by living in all respects conformably to his precepts and example." (Mac-knight.) On thorough examination, having asked forgiveness for all we have found not in harmony with the will of God, we may proceed to eat the supper. This examination each must do for himself; no one is subjected to such an examination by others.

If he discern not the body. One eats and drinks judgment to himself if he discern not the Lord's body. This judgment is an expression of the

Lord's displeasure, but whether in this life or in the day of judgment is not so clear. No doubt prolonged and willful observance in an unworthy manner would bring damnation to one's soul. To discern the Lord's body is to see in the bread and cup that which Jesus intended. Those who made a meal of the supper failed to see in it the Lord's body. They saw satisfaction of physical appetite, not food for the soul in communion with the Lord.

For this cause many are weak and sickly. Barnes and other commentators think this refers to physical weakness and sickness. But if so, the word sleep, which means death, must be taken literally, or physically. Since this cannot be, we must take *weak and sickly* to mean they were in poor spiritual condition, and some even spiritually dead, because they were taking the supper in the wrong manner.

If we discern ourselves. If we would subject ourselves to close examination and cleanse ourselves, by confession and prayer, from our faults, *we would not be judged*, or condemned by the Lord; we would not suffer this weakness and spiritual sickness.

When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord. Judgment for these mistakes takes the form of disciplinary measures in this life. God is not taking vengeance upon his children, but he is chastening them for their good. As our earthly fathers chasten us to correct us, so God chastens every son whom he receives that he may be partaker of his holiness. (Heb. 12: 7-13.) Not all chastening is corrective, or an account of our sins. Job did not suffer on account of sins, though his friends thought so, and accused him of it.

That we may not be condemned with the world. This states the purpose of chastening we receive from the Lord. It is God's way of keeping us pure, humble, obedient, submissive. This implies that the world is to be condemned to suffer punishment. It implies that God's children will be subjected to the same punishment if they do not examine themselves, but willfully show disrespect for the body and blood of the Lord.

Next, it implies the salvation of all who follow these instructions in reverent humility.

When ye come together, wait one for another. They had not been waiting for each other, but "each one taketh before other his own supper." (Verse 21.) There could be no fellowship or communion; it was a show of selfishness and greediness.

If any man is hungry, let him eat at home. If some objected to waiting for others on the ground that he was hungry, Paul said eat at home for this was no place or time to satisfy

bodily hunger, which was to be done at home. But waiting for others can be overdone, as there are some who seem to have been born both tired and late; they've never got rested, nor have they caught up; they are always late regardless of the time set. Periods of worship must be started on time. But these brethren were rushing to the supper ahead of others, much as women shoppers push to get to the counter ahead of others. Being used to orderly services, we can hardly imagine the disorder obviously allowed at Corinth.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus has a right to be remembered because (1) he has rendered the greatest service for mankind; (2) he paid the greatest price ever paid to render such service; and (3) he rendered the most unselfish service ever rendered, manifesting the greatest love ever known.

2. We are under obligation to remember Jesus because (1) we were guilty of sin and exposed to eternal death as the due reward of our deeds; (2) we have no worth or merit of our own on account of which to

claim his love and service; and (3) we continually falter in our efforts to honor him, yet he pleads our cause at the throne of grace.

3. There is a tendency to give too little time and thought to the Lord's supper. In most places it occupies a secondary place in the worship. It will prove worth while for the average congregation to study their program of worship to see if the Lord's supper holds the important place it should.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is a memorial?

Name and discuss two Jewish memorials.

Of what is the Lord's supper commemorative?

What can be said of the adaptability of the elements of the Lord's supper?

Golden Text Explained

What is the Catholic doctrine concerning the bread and wine?

How does this compare with heathen practices?

What did the shedding of blood of animals slain in connection with covenants mean?

What application can you make of this concerning the blood of the new covenant?

What about his death do we proclaim when we eat the Lord's supper?

What do we learn about the kingdom from this teaching concerning the Lord's supper?

How long will people be expected to observe the Lord's supper?

Institution Recalled

Where did Paul get his information as to how Jesus instituted the supper?

What is there about the institution of

the supper to increase our faith in Jesus?

What is the difference between *giving thanks* and *blessing* the bread?

What is meant by the expression, *this is my body*?

What is the cup which Jesus blessed, and drank?

Can you prove that the supper should be observed weekly?

Manner of Observance

In what manner were the Corinthians taking the supper?

Why was it easy for them to observe the supper in this manner?

What is meant by being guilty of the body and blood of Jesus?

How did Jesus accuse the lawyers of a similar sin?

What is meant by proving ourselves?

Does the congregation have the right to prove individuals before allowing them to eat?

What is meant by discerning the Lord's body?

What is the result of taking the supper in an unworthy manner?

What is the advantage of discerning ourselves?

How are we chastened of the Lord and why?

Distinguish between chastening and taking vengeance.

What is implied in Paul's statement about being condemned with the world?

What is meant by waiting one for another?
Does this require us to start worship be-
cause some are late arriving at place
of worship?

How does Paul teach that the Lord's sup-
per is not to satisfy bodily hunger?
Give special attention today to the les-
sons suggested in Topics for Discussion.

Lesson VIII—August 20, 1950

THE FUTURE LIFE

The Lesson Text

2 Cor. 5: 1-10

1 For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

2 For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight);

8 We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

9 Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him.

10 For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil.

1: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 15: 35-46.

Daily Bible Readings

August 14. M.....	Questions of Future Life Raised (Job. 14: 7-17)
August 15. T.....	Daniel's View of Future Life (Dan. 12: 1-4)
August 16.	W. Two Places to Spend the Future (Luke 16: 19-31)
August 17.	T. Many Mansions in Heaven (John 14: 1-13)
August 18. F.....	Some Conditions of Eternal Life (2 Pet. 1: 5-11)
August 19. S.....	Overcomers Inherit Eternal Life (Rev. 21: 1-8)
August 20.	S. A Description of the Holy City (Rev. 21: 9-27)

TIME.—A.D. 58.

PLACE.—Paul wrote from somewhere in Macedonia, perhaps Philippi.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Corinth.

Introduction

Both the purposes for which and the conditions under which this second letter to the church at Corinth was written are of interest. Paul wrote the first letter from Ephesus shortly before he left that city. It was written to correct many abuses in doctrine and practice; it urged discipline on incestuous characters who were acceptable to the church. Paul was anxious to know how the letter was received by the church.

He visited Troas after leaving Ephesus (2 Cor. 2: 12), and though a great door was opened to him there, he could have no relief of spirit because he did not find Titus there with information as to how Corinth had received his letter. (2 Cor. 2: 13.) So he went on into Macedonia, and there can be little doubt this means he went to Philippi. At this place he perhaps had more real friends than at any other place he had worked.

In his letter he had only praise for them, thanking them for their fellowship from the very first day. (Phil. 1: 5.) But in spite of the fact he was among his best friends, he found no relief; there were fightings without and fears within (2 Cor. 7: 5), until God comforted him by the coming of Titus to inform him of the good reception his letter had, and of the reformation it worked in the church at Corinth. (2 Cor. 7: 6ff.)

Immediately he wrote the second letter. In fact some think he wrote the first six chapters before the coming of Titus, and that the change of tone at that point shows the arrival of Titus. In this letter he expresses his love for those in the church

who had accepted his teaching. His tenderness and affectionate terms remind us of his letter to the Philippians. Yet there was an element in the church, led by an emissary of Satan who had come, it seems, from Judaea, who refused to accept Paul's teaching, held that he was not an apostle, and said he did not take pay from the church because he realized he was not entitled to it on account of his not being a real apostle. (2 Cor. 11.) To these enemies he directs some of the most bitter and sarcastic language to be found in his writings. This divided condition, therefore, accounts for the use of affectionate language in some chapters, and sharp criticism and rebuke in others.

Golden Text Explained

1. **To Live Is Christ.** This is not a complete sentence, yet its meaning is obvious. Paul was Christ centered; not self-centered. It was his aim to do only those things which would honor the Lord. His life was devoted to Christ, and he intended to spend it for him. The offers of the world and the devil had not sufficient appeal to turn him aside from this course. To live this Christ-centered life one (1) must learn all he can about Christ. We must know of his person, his work, his character, and his will concerning us. Too many people know so little about the Lord, and they are satisfied to go through life without knowing any more. (2) We must determine to live like Christ, to imitate him in feelings, motives, desires, thoughts, words, and deeds. We must let him live in us. We must have no desire to live our own lives, but to manifest the life of Jesus in our mortal bodies. (3) We must find happiness in taking the knowledge of Jesus to others. Many are content with having accepted Christ for their individual salvation, but have no desire or intention to take him to others. This is a self-centered way of life. (4) We must learn to enjoy Christ. There are pleasures in the world, in sin. (Heb. 11: 25.) But those who live unto Christ are to cultivate an abhorrence of all that is evil, and an appreciation of all that is holy. (Rom. 12: 9; Col. 3: 1-3; 1 John 2: 15-17.) The advantage of living such a life, of living unto Christ, is seen in the fact that no one ever came to

the brink of the grave, looked back over this kind of life, and expressed regret for having so lived. No one ever lay down at night with an uneasy conscience for having so lived. But countless thousands have expressed regret for not living this kind of life.

2. **To Die Is Gain.** The word gain implies profit, or advantage. So from Paul's point of view there was an advantage in dying over living. Death held no terrors for him; Jesus had taken the terrors out of death, and his fellowship with Jesus gave him courage to face death, the kind of terrors, without fear, even with the thought of gain. God taught men of long ago that there is something better beyond the grave by taking Enoch as a reward for his godly life. (Gen. 5: 21-24.) If there is no gain, Enoch was cheated, since he lived only a little more than one third as long as his son. Wherein is the gain?

(1) The dead are not subject to temptation, and consequent sorrows, humiliations and repentance which follow. As long as we live in this world we are subject to such, but death takes us out of the reach of temptation. (2) The righteous dead are delivered from the presence of sin, and the company of sinners. Righteous Lot was sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked about him. Sin should be repugnant to holy people, and relief from sinful environment will mean much, it will be a great gain. Many of us have never cultivated such an abhorrence

of sin that sinful practices are repugnant to us. This is one characteristic of the Lord which is seldom mentioned, and too little imitated. The more we cultivate this quality the less liable are we to sin, and the more we will appreciate heaven when we get there. (3) We gain freedom from sickness and suffering. (Rev. 21: 4.) (4) We gain in association and environment. Here we are restricted, limited, in our association. At best

we can know but few people, and we can be intimately associated with a very few. But in heaven the host is innumerable. They are not limited to one country, or generation, or one dispensation. Our friends will consist of people of all times, races, and countries. And they will all be holy people whose hearts will be in perfect tune with ours. Truly it is a gain to the Christian to die.

Exposition of the Text

I. Hope of a Future Life (2 Cor. 5: 1-5)

If the earthly house of our tabernacle. This expression refers to this physical body. It is an earthly house. It is a tabernacle, a tent, a temporary dwelling. But since it is the dwelling place of the real being, we must conclude that there is something more to man than we can see and feel. Paul had just said, "Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4: 16.) The *outward man* is the earthly house, while the *inward man* is that which dwells within the earthly house.

Be dissolved. This word means to take a thing apart, as a building: the different pieces of lumber which make a house are taken loose from each other. So our earthly house will be dissolved, it will decay, go back to its original elements. We shall not always be confined within the limits of this body which is subject to disease, debility, and death.

We have a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The contrasts here are not too sharp, at least at first sight. This body in which we now dwell is of God in the sense that he created it, or gave it a being through processes of natural law. But that body, or building, we shall have in the next world is from God, not through natural generation, but directly. *Not made with hands.* There are some who contend that the building we have from God is not the heavenly body, but the mansion Jesus is preparing, and this statement that it is not made with hands favors that view. But since the whole is a contrast with the *earthly house of our tabernacle*, it seems best to reject the

mansion theory, held by Macknight, and stay with the idea of a contrast of the earthly and heavenly bodies. Unlike this earthly body, it will be eternal; and still more unlike this one we live in, it will be in heaven. Paul says the earthly is first, the heavenly second. (1 Cor. 15: 46-49.)

In this we groan. This body is subject to ills, pains, and discomforts, which often cause us to groan, to long for deliverance from it. All this excites within us our hope of being *clothed upon with our habitation from above*, or our heavenly body which God shall give us in the resurrection. With Paul the idea of *longing* for this change was very common, but with most of us, especially the young and middle aged, it is a strange idea. But after one has suffered persecution, or bodily ailments due to disease or injury, life in this body may even, and usually does, become a burden, and people actually long for deliverance.

We shall not be found naked. In heaven the soul will not be a naked spirit, but will have a body exceeding this one in glory. (1 Cor. 15: 40ff.) Spirits seem to desire a body in which to live, even evil spirits. Demons preferred to be in swine rather than roaming without a body. (Mark 5.) Since the new body is to be given in the resurrection, it follows that the souls of men will be without that eternal habitation until that time. Macknight thinks there is an indication here that the wicked will not have an eternal body, only the righteous will be thus blessed. He believes the wicked will stand in judgment in their resurrected mortal bodies, that the fire of hell will burn them, and they will be naked, in the sense of this text, forever. He reaches this conclusion on the *silence*

of the scripture rather than on what it says.

Not for that we would be unclothed. Paul says our desire is not merely that we shall be unclothed of this body, but that we shall be clothed upon with the heavenly body. The word unclothed means to *get out of* and *away from*. This same Greek word used in Col. 3: 9 where Paul says we have *put off* the old man. The reason why Paul wished to be clothed upon with his heavenly body was that he wanted mortality to be swallowed up of life; that this mortal should put on immortality, the corruptible should put on incorruption. (1 Cor. 15: 53, 54.)

He that wrought us for this is God. God made us have this desire, this hope for future life; it is of God, and therefore a holy desire.

Who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. The word *earnest* means a first or part payment as proof of full subsequent payment; earnest money is paid to assure full payment. The earnest of the Spirit is simply the Holy Spirit given as the earnest of that for which we hope. Paul says the Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, which is eternal life. (Eph. 1: 14; 1 Pet. 1: 4.) All who have the Holy Spirit (Acts 5: 32) have the earnest of eternal life, and may therefore be said to have eternal life now. Those who do not believe that God gives us the Holy Spirit, and that he dwells in our bodies (1 Cor. 6: 19), will have great difficulty handling such passages as this and many others of like import.

II. Source of Courage (2 Cor. 5: 6-8)

Always of good courage. This is a conclusion, or a consequence, of what has gone before. Being fully assured of a change from this mortal body which is the victim of disease and death, and eternal life in a more glorious body given of God to be worn eternally, Paul took courage for the trials of life.

At home in the body, absent from the Lord. Here again those who believe that man is all mortal have a statement they cannot handle. What is at home in the body, if man is all body? Though the Lord is always with us here as long as we do his will (2 Cor. 13: 5b), he is not with us, nor we with him, in the sense in

which we shall dwell together in heaven. So it is correct to speak of us as being absent from the Lord as long as we are on earth.

We walk by faith, not by sight. Paul had just said, "While we look not at the things which are seen, . . . for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4: 18.) These unseen things determine the life we live. We have never seen God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit, yet we believe they exist and that they are God and have a right to command us, and we are obligated to obey them. We have never seen heaven, but we believe there is such a place, and our desire to go there has much to do in determining the life we live. We do not walk by sight, that is, we do not allow the things we see to draw us away from the course which the unseen things determine for us. We see pleasures about us, inviting us to join in the frivolities of the age; we see riches and the life of ease which the rich are able to live, but we cannot afford to allow these things to divert us from the path of righteousness determined by the unseen forces. Our faith in the unseen comes from the word of God. (Rom. 10: 17.) This shows us the necessity of a knowledge of God's word, for without it the unseen forces have no influence upon us. The things temporal and seen have all the advantage, being near us, a part of us and our daily lives, and so well adapted to the lusts and desires of the physical man, that it is difficult to keep our attention on the things unseen, which are far away, and appreciation for them has to be cultivated.

Willing rather to be absent from the body. On account of the continual warfare between the flesh and spirit, Paul actually wished to depart and be with Christ. (Phil. 1: 21.) He was *willing rather*, that is, he desired to be absent from the body, for that meant being at home with the Lord. Here again something about Paul was absent from the body, so he was more than body; when that something was absent from the body, it was at home with the Lord. The body was not with the Lord, for it was buried. Man is a dual being, composed of body and soul, or spirit:

once said to be body, soul, spirit. (1 Thess. 5: 23.) The spirit returns to God who gave it. (Eccles. 12: 7.) The thief went with Jesus at death to Paradise (Luke 23: 43), and Paradise was in Hades, for Jesus went there. (Acts 2: 27).

III. Living in View of Judgment (2

Cor. 5: 9, 10)

We *make it our aim*. Some go through life without an aim. Others aim at wealth, honor, power socially and politically. But Paul had one aim. There is an advantage in singleness of purpose, though it is often difficult in this world of conflicting emotions and influences.

Whether at home or absent. The terms at home and absent refer back to preceding verses, and mean whether in the body or out of it, whether alive or dead, whether in this world or in the next. And this aim which Paul had was entertained on account of the hope he had of the future life, and in view of the judgment to come which would determine whether he would spend that future life with the Lord or away from him.

To be *well-pleasing unto him*. What a practical, yet what a wonderful aim! It is simple, yet it includes everything we ought to do and be. It means complete surrender to the Lord and to his will. We have no will of our own, but are submissive to him in all he requires of us. It means that we recognize him as all-

wise, knowing what is best for us; that he is good, requiring nothing of us but what is for our good; and that he is our Judge and to him we must account for the way we have lived. Seeing that we must account to him, it behooves us to live according to his directions, to please him in all things that he may be pleased to approve of us in the day of judgment.

All must be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ. All will be there, none excused, not even allowed to be tardy. The judgment will be an open affair. Many people do not like for their private affairs to be published in court, or in newspapers. But here our affairs will be published before the universe. Christ will be the judge. (2 Tim. 4: 1.)

Receive the things done in the body. We will be judged according to what was done in, through, the body. If some one has the idea he is not responsible for what his body does, let him read this again. This is not what the body does of itself, for it is incapable of doing anything without the consent and direction of the mind. All things we do are done through the body, and on this basis we will be judged before the universe. To receive the things done in the body is to receive reward or punishment according to whether they are pleasing or displeasing to the judge. It is then we will either be happy we walked by faith, or be exceedingly sorrowful that we walked by sight.

Topics for Discussion

1. The body is merely a tabernacle, a tent. As storms pitch and toss a tent, so the sorrows, trials, diseases and accidents of life try the strength of this tabernacle in which we live; and one day the tent strings will give way, its moorings will cease to hold, and this tabernacle will go down in death. Where then will the dweller go?

2. The frailty of the body and the possibility of its being dissolved at any time, makes it all the more necessary that we be in a state of preparation. We are told to do at

least three things, watch, work, and pray, that we may be ready to go.

3. The love of peace and happiness, the fear of eternal punishment, and the knowledge that we must all stand before Christ to be judged according to what we have done, are great forces at work in us to make of us what we should be. These things should fill our thoughts, engage our minds, employ our tongues far more than the politics of the nation, the great athletes of the day, or the social trivialities of the community in which we live.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons this lesson.

Introduction

Can you account for the whereabouts of Paul between the writing of the two letters to the church at Corinth?

What do you know of his state of mind during this time?
 Who brought him comfort? and by what was he comforted?
 How do you account for the tenderness and the sharp rebukes of this second letter?

Golden Text Explained

What is the opposite of being self-centered?
 Name and discuss five things implied in living a Christ-centered life.
 What is the advantage in living the Christ-centered life?
 Why did death hold no terrors for Paul, and is it possible for us to have his view?
 How did God teach men in the time of Enoch that it is good to go to be with God?
 Name and discuss four reasons why it is a gain to die.
 Why is it more difficult for young people to see this than it is for old people?

Hope of a Future Life

What is our physical body called in our text?
 What proof do we have in this that man is not wholly mortal?
 What is meant by the body being dissolved?
 What three things are said of our heavenly body?
 How are these contrasted with our present body?

Why are we said to groan in this body?
 For what is our primary longing?
 What is the desire of all spirits, even evil spirits?
 What is the meaning of unclothed in our text?
 For what has God wrought us?
 What is meant by the earnest of the Spirit?

Source of Courage

Why was Paul of good courage?
 What is meant by being at home with the Lord?
 What is meant by walking by faith, and by sight?
 Why is it easier to walk by sight?
 What was Paul's desire with reference to dwelling in the body?
 Where does the spirit go when it leaves the body?

Living in View of Judgment

What is meant by making a thing our aim?
 What was Paul's aim, and the aim of every Christian?
 What caused Paul to have this as his sole aim in life?
 What can you say of the universality of the judgment?
 According to what will we be judged?
 What is meant by receiving the things done in the body?
 Who will be judge, and why should we be glad for him to be our judge?
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IX—August 27, 1950

CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY

The Lesson Text

2 Cor. 8: 1-12

1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Mac-e-do'-ni-a;

2 How that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, *they gave* of their own accord,

4 Beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints:

5 And *this*, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God.

6 Insomuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also.

7 But as ye abound in everything, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowl-

edge, and *in* all earnestness, and in your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Je'-sus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

10 And herein I give *my* judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will.

11 But now complete the doing also; that as *there was* the readiness to will, so *there may be* the completion also out of your ability.

12 For if the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he* hath not.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* (Acts 20: 35b.)
 DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 9: 6-12.

Daily Bible Readings

August 21.	M.	Laying Up Treasures in Heaven (Matt. 6: 19-30)
August 22.	T.	The Man Who Thought Only of Self (Luke 12: 13-21)
August 23.	W.	A Liberal Offering to Jesus (John 12: 1-8)
August 24.	T.	Liberality of Jerusalem Church (Acts 4: 32-37)
August 25.	F.	Antioch Sends Offering to the Poor (Acts 11: 27-30)
August 26.	S.	Paul Gathers Offerings for the Poor (Rom. 15: 22-29)
August 27.	S.	The Liberal Sow to the Spirit (Gal. 6: 6-10)

TIME.—A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Macedonia and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Corinth.

Introduction

There is more space in the Bible devoted to teaching on the way we handle our wealth than is devoted to any other subject, unless it be on this subject of faith. That does not mean that giving of money is more important than anything else, but it does mean that we have to have more teaching on that subject to get us to do our duty than we must have to get us to do other things. Many of us are like the rich man who thought only of himself. He would build bigger barns to hold the produce of the land, instead of sharing it with his less fortunate neighbors. Others of us are like another rich man in that we are willing to share our wealth with others, but we prefer to share it with people who do not need help; we wish to feast with them, enjoy life. (Luke 16.) Sharing our wealth with the poor who are not able to return the favors does not appeal to many. Jesus said we should not invite our rich neighbors to feast with us lest they recompense us, but we are to invite the poor so we can be recompensed in heaven. (Luke 14: 12-14.)

Paul said the taught are to communicate with the teacher, and we must not be deceived for God is not mocked; he knows how we spend our money. If we sow (spend our money) to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap

corruption; but if we sow (spend our money) to the spirit, we shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. We have given this rule a general application so long that we have about lost sight of its primary lesson. But this is it. If we spend our money on things which satisfy the lusts and desires of the flesh, for worldly pleasures, we will be lost. But if we spend our money for preaching the gospel, doing good for the poor, we will gain eternal life. Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell what he had and give to the poor, and he would have treasures in heaven. (Matt. 19: 21.) Jesus taught that we may provide for our future eternal welfare by the right use of the mammon of unrighteousness. (Luke 16: 9.)

Liberality is something the average person has to learn. We are naturally inclined to the opposite of liberality. Many people give something each Lord's day who never learn the grace of liberality. Like other Christlike qualities, it has to be cultivated. If you are now giving a dollar each week, try giving two dollars. It is possible that you will find that you can do so without bankrupting yourself. When it gets easy to give two, try giving three per week. Only by increasing your gifts can you cultivate the grace of liberality.

Golden Text Explained

1. More Blessed to Give. This is one statement Jesus made which is not recorded by any writer except Paul. John says that all the deeds and sayings of Jesus could not be recorded. (John 21: 25.) Though

he lived less than an average number of years, he accomplished more in his lifetime than any other individual regardless of the number of years lived. To be *more blessed* means that one gets a greater blessing from

giving than from receiving; one gets more happiness, more joy and satisfaction, from giving than one can get from receiving. (1) One is more like God when giving than when receiving. God is in need of nothing, so is never on the receiving end of the line; he is always giving. He gave his only begotten Son, his greatest gift, to die for us. When we learn to give liberally and cheerfully, we become more like God. (2) When we learn to give until we make a sacrifice, we become like Jesus Christ. Paul points out in our lesson that Jesus was once rich, but he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. Again, Paul says Jesus was on equality with the Father, but he emptied himself, took upon himself our nature, humbled himself to die on the cross for our sins. (Phil. 2: 5-8.) It is a blessed thing to be like Christ, and we can never do that until we learn to give. Receiving never develops that quality. (3) Giving is an ennobling, elevating, expanding experience. Though it may for a time impoverish the purse, it enriches the soul much more. It gives one the feeling of being worth while, of making the world a better place to live. Were it not for the fact that we are continually mindful that all we give to others we receive from God, we might become proud and think too much of ourselves.

2. **Than to Receive.** It is not sinful to receive, nor to be in such condition that it is necessary for us to receive from others. Yet receiving is not attended by as many blessings as is giving. (1) This is true because

there is no reward here or in heaven for receiving. The hungry are not promised a reward for receiving food, but the giver is promised a rich reward. (Matt. 25: 34-36.) (2) Receiving has a tendency to humiliate, to give one an inferiority complex, instead of making him feel that he is worth while, and has made the world a better place in which to live. (3) The giver is blessed by both men and God. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom." (Luke 6: 38.) God loves a cheerful giver, and he will multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness. (2 Cor. 9: 7-10.) While giving thus enriches one, receiving has a tendency to act in the opposite direction. People who have never had to make their living, but have lived off others, learn to be dependent; they do not develop initiative; they may even become downright lazy. Occasional receiving in times of adversity and financial reverses do not, of course, bring a person to this point, but even that has a tendency to humiliate, and if repeated often enough it may cultivate the feeling in one that the world owes them a living. (4) Receiving indicates that one is in a dependent condition, while giving indicates one is independent of his fellow man. None of us wish to be dependent. Hence we can join with the Lord in saying we had rather be in position to give than be in a position which makes it necessary for us to receive from others.

Exposition of the Text

I. Macedonian Liberality (2 Cor. 8: 1-6)

The grace of God given in the churches of Macedonia. Some take the word grace to mean gift, so they speak of the "gift of God" as being a great gift. But it seems best to look at it as "a gracious disposition" on the part of the Macedonian churches. Next, this grace is given of God. Certainly it is not a miraculous gift, direct from heaven to certain persons or churches. But such disposition is of God because (1) we learn it from him by his example in giving his Son; (2) we learn it from his

teaching in the Bible. Such gracious disposition is not known where God's word has not gone. Hospitals, asylums, rescue homes, child-welfare organizations are not known where God is unknown. Those who reject God and disbelieve his word ought to count the blessings they enjoy in this land of Bibles which they could not enjoy if we did not have the Bible. The churches of Macedonia include Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea that we know about, probably others.

In much proof of affliction. This was in the form of persecution. The Jews persecuted Paul when he was

there, and no doubt, they continued to persecute the church.

The abundance of their joy. This was not joy in spite of persecution, but joy in persecution. James says we are to count it all joy when we fall into manifold trials. (James 1:

2.) Their possession of Christ and their hope of eternal life added much to their joy.

And their deep poverty. The gospel appeals to the poor class of people; they usually receive it first. And persecutors of that day usually stripped people of their possessions. (See 1 Thess. 2: 14.) Theirs was not the usual poverty, however, but it was a *deep* poverty, unusual poverty.

Abounded unto the riches of their liberality. The word *abounded unto* suggests that their liberality was enhanced on account of their affliction and poverty, and not in spite of it. Most of us give poverty as a reason why we do not give. But these people were in such poverty that they knew how to sympathize with people who were in need, and this led them to give all the more liberally out of their meager possessions.

Beyond their power, of their own accord. They gave more than they were able to give. Since Paul was a great believer in sacrifice, and one who practiced it to a great degree, this appraisal of their gift has great force. It means nothing for some people to say that a gift is beyond the power of the giver, for the one doing the appraising knows nothing of sacrifice. But Paul knew sacrifice and if he thought they gave more than they were able, we may be sure their gift was really liberal. It was also of their own accord. Paul did not urge them. No doubt he taught them the truth on the subject, but some people are more responsive to truth than others. These people received it as God's word. (1 Thess. 2: 13.)

Beseeking us with much entreaty. These Macedonians begged Paul to accept their gift, and bear it to the saints in Judaea. This implies that Paul was reluctant to accept their offering, and we know of no reason except that it was beyond their power.

First gave their own selves to the Lord. Paul says they gave, *not as he*

hoped, but first gave their own selves. Macknight says it is better translated *not as we feared*, and gives a Greek authority for it. Others use the word *expected*, which makes good sense, and is to be preferred. The reason for their giving beyond Paul's expectation was the fact that they first gave their own selves to the Lord. Entire consecration to God makes giving easy. If we realize that not only what we have, but we ourselves belong to him, we will be glad to use what we have for his glory. It should be easy to give ourselves to God when we remember that he gave himself for us. Again, when we remember that Jesus shed his blood to redeem us from the bondage of sin, we should find it easy to give ourselves to him to be used in his service. This is the outstanding point in this section of the lesson, and the students should be led to give much thought to entire consecration to God.

To us through the will of God. This means they lent themselves to the project Paul had in his heart and was working out among the churches. They gave wholehearted cooperation to his plan for relief of the poor in Judaea. When people have made full consecration of their own selves to God, they will cooperate with the people of God in doing good. They might have objected that Judaea was a long distance from them, and they wished to use their money closer home where they could see how it was used, etc. But maybe they had not learned these modern excuses which are really ways of keeping from doing a good work. They could very well have said that they had all the poor in their community they were able to help, and so could have sent Paul on his way without a penny; and then when he was gone they could have conveniently neglected, or forgot about, taking care of the poor near by.

Insomuch that we exhorted Titus. From this we learn that Titus was at Corinth before, and that he had formerly urged the Corinthians to give to the poor. Now Paul wishes him to go among them again to stir them up to do as they had signified they would do, and that they who had more wealth would not be outdone by the poorer Macedonians.

II. Exhortations to Liberty (2 Cor. 8: 7-12)

But as ye abound in everything. This is a tactful approach by Paul. He commends them for the possession of so many gifts from God. "That in everything ye were enriched in him." (1 Cor. 1: 5.) Paul was not a flatterer, but he was willing to give praise where it was deserved, and where it would do good.

In faith, utterance, knowledge, earnestness, love. These are the gifts Paul mentions and which the Corinthians possessed. Whether this faith was that which comes by hearing the word of God, (Rom. 10: 17), or the miraculous gift by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 9), it is difficult, maybe impossible, for us to determine. The *utterance* means their ability to speak in many languages, which we know is one of the nine gifts of the Spirit. *Knowledge* may also be one of those miraculous gifts (1 Cor. 12: 8), or it may be such as is gained through study. *Earnestness* denotes an intense, serious, and sincere state of mind; a tempered restrained eagerness. Other versions have diligence. And *love to us* is to acknowledge the love of the church at Corinth for him. Many of them did love him deeply. Some did not love him, but in this exhortation was no place to mention such dispositions.

Abound in this grace also. The idea is that since they abounded in all these graces, they should wish to abound in all good graces. Giving is called a grace; it is a practical grace. Some abound in the graces which do not call for sacrifice and toil, but are poverty stricken in the graces which call for action and self-denial. This closes Paul's first exhortation in this section, and is based on the fact that they abounded in many gifts.

I speak not by way of commandment. This was also good policy, though Paul was not a policy man. He was not commanding them, but entreating them. People will do more, and their reward will be greater, if they do good because they love it, than if they do good for fear they will be punished. Another reason for not issuing a commandment was that he wished to stir them by the *earnestness of others*, that is, the Macedo-

nians. In this way he could prove, test, the sincerity of their love. They had said they would do great things for the poor, but Paul feared they might not do as much as they promised. (2 Cor. 9: 1-5.) So he was using every means possible and right to stir them up to do all they were able to do.

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus. The word grace here means that feeling of pity and kindness which Christ exhibited when he came from heaven to earth to die for men. In verse 7 Paul exhorted them to abound in this grace also. We are to cultivate that feeling for the poor, the suffering and sorrowing, which Christ manifested when he came to die for all. This is not a well-known grace; it is not very popular.

Though he was rich, he became poor. When was he rich? This proves his pre-existence, for certainly he was never richer in this world. He was rich in that he was on equality with God, he existed in the form of God (Phil. 2: 5-8), he had angels for his associates instead of publicans and sinners. He became poor in that

(1) he was born into a home of poverty, and lived in a despised city where the poorest of the poor lived.

(2) He worked for others all his life, never trying to lay up something for a time of need. (3) He was buried in a borrowed tomb, and friends furnished the things necessary to care for his body.

Ye through his poverty might become rich. He became poor *for your sakes*. Man was in a lost and ruined state; he was poor indeed; his spiritual condition was poor. Jesus became poor so that man might go from his state of destitution to a state of riches. And how rich are we? and all the world may be? (1) We have salvation from sin; the power, pollution, guilt, state, and consequence of sin. Who can measure the wealth of one who possesses that? (2) We have the promise that if we seek first his kingdom he will care for us, even better than he cares for the birds of the heaven or the lambs of the field. He will never leave us nor forsake us, but will fill our every need above that we are able to ask. (Eph. 3: 20.)

(3) We are heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8: 17), of

all the infinite wisdom of God ran plan and the infinite power of God can execute for our happiness in that eternal world, where neither pain nor parting will ever be known. We can never know what his poverty meant to him, nor what our riches mean to us until we reach heaven, but we can get sufficient glimpse of them here to make us appreciate his love and kindness toward us, and lead us to consecrate our all to him as long as we live in this world. This is Paul's second exhortation in this division of our lesson, based upon the grace of Christ.

Not only to do, but also to will.

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul told the Macedonians what the Corinthians had promised to do (2 Cor. 9: 2) to stir up zeal; he then told the Corinthians what the Macedonians had done to urge them to keep their promise. It is good to encourage people by the examples of others.

2. Consecration of self to the Lord means giving all. But one does not have to put all in the plate to give all to God. Providing for one's fam-

The church at Corinth made the beginning in this matter a year before, that is, at the time Paul was with them. They had done something toward the matter. It seems they had made some contribution. But the greatest thing was their *will*, their promise, or pledge to give a certain amount to the poor.

Completion also out of your ability. Since they so readily willed, Paul exhorted them to be as ready to do, to complete, or carry through to completion, their pledge. For the gift is acceptable if it be in keeping with one's ability, according to what one has.

ily is a part of giving all to God. But using money for satisfaction of the desires of the flesh is no part of it.

3. Paul makes use of the most sublime truths to move people to the most practical duties. The condescension and sacrifice of Christ are used as basis of exhortation to move people to give of their money to relieve hunger and provide shelter and raiment.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

How much space, comparatively, is devoted in the Bible to the subject of giving?

Name some Bible characters who were selfish, and some who were generous.

What is the duty of the taught with reference to the teacher?

What is meant by sowing to the flesh? Sowing to the spirit?

How may we provide for our future welfare?

Are people naturally inclined to be generous?

How may we cultivate the grace of giving?

Golden Text Explained

To whom are we indebted for the statement of this text?

What is the meaning of "more blessed" in this verse?

Name and discuss three reasons why it is blessed to give.

Give and discuss four reasons why receiving is less blessed than giving.

Which is more difficult, to believe this doctrine or to practice it, and why?

Macedonian Liberality

What is the meaning of the grace of God in our text?

In what sense may we say this grace is of God?

What blessings do we enjoy on account of this grace being made known to us?

How many Macedonian churches can you name?

From what were the Macedonian churches suffering?

What did they have in which to find joy?

What do you know of their financial condition?

What effect did these things have on their liberality?

What did Paul say of the amount of their gift?

Was it necessary for him to bring pressure on them to get them to give?

What implies that Paul was reluctant to accept their offering?

Why should people give their own selves to the Lord?

What suggests the wholehearted cooperation of these churches?

What excuses might they have offered for not making a contribution?

Who worked with Paul in collecting money?

Exhortations to Liberality

How did Paul commend the Corinthians?

What kind of faith did they have? What is denoted by utterance as used here?

What is the meaning of knowledge as used here, and earnestness?

What did Paul say of their love for him?

In what sense is giving money a grace?

Why did Paul not command the Corinthians to give?

How was the sincerity of their love to be tested?
 What is the meaning of the word grace in verse 9?
 When was Jesus rich, and in what did the riches consist?
 When did he become poor, and in what did the poverty consist?

Why did Jesus become poor?
 In what does our riches in him consist?
 What had the Corinthians started a year before?
 According to what were they to give?
 What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson X—September 3, 1950

SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

The Lesson Text

2 Cor. 11: 23-33

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep;

26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, in perils from *my* countrymen, *in* perils from the óén'-tiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

27 *In* labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is caused to stumble, and I burn not?

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness.

31 The God and Father of the Lord Je'-sus, he who is blessed for evermore knoweth that I lie not.

32 In Da-mas'-cus the governor under Ar'-e-tas the king guarded the city of the Dam-a-scenes' in order to take me:

33 And through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"*(2 Tim. 3: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 14: 19-25.

Daily Bible Readings

August 28. M..... The World Will Hate Christians (John 15: 17-27)
 August 29. T. The First Persecution (Acts 4: 1-22)
 August 30. W. Great Persecution Under Saul (Acts 8: 1-8)
 August 31. T. Paul Suffering Persecution (Acts 13: 19-28)
 September 1. F. Glorified If We Suffer with Him (Rom. 8: 16-25)
 September 2. S. Rest for Sufferer When Jesus Comes (2 Thess. 1: 3-12)
 September 3. S..... Obtaining a Better Resurrection (Heb. 11: 32-40)

TIME.—A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Macedonia and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Corinth.

Introduction

The ways of man are not the ways of God. (Isa. 55: 8, 9.) Man has always been stubborn and has insisted on walking in his own ways. Jehovah said, Ask for the old paths and ye shall find rest. But the people

said, We will not walk therein. Jehovah said, Harken to the trumpet of the watchman; but the people said, We will not hearken. (Jer. 6: 16, 17.) And so it has always been. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in

heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts 7: 51.) Jesus came to seek and to save the lost; but the lost refused to believe they were lost, and persecuted him for telling them so. Being determined to walk in their own ways, people do not like to be disturbed in conscience by hearing prophets and preachers denounce them for their sins. But since people must be convicted of their sins before they can be saved from their sins, it is the duty of men of God to tell them of their sins. The world hated Jesus because he insisted on telling them of their sins. (John 7: 7.) Peter and other apostles were persecuted because they put the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus on the Jews. (Acts 5: 28.) Paul was persecuted because he stood in the way of the Judaizers, not allowing them to bind circumcision on the Gentiles. (Gal. 5: 11.) So the faithful preacher and teacher of the word of God to-day will tell people of their sins in

order to convict them of sin and bring them to the Lord. When this is done, there will be persecution in some form. There is a tendency among churches today to avoid saying anything that will offend. Pressure is brought on preachers to say nothing which will contradict the doctrines and practices of our most respectable religious neighbors. There is little objection raised if he wishes to talk about a small group, especially if none of them are present. But if he mentions a prominent religious denomination, the weaklings in the church ask the elders to put a stop to such preaching. This is not to encourage abuse from the pulpit, but it is to discourage worldly, untaught, compromising groups in their efforts to keep the preacher from crying out against perversions of the gospel. They should be endorsing and encouraging the preacher, willing to endure their portion of the persecution which comes to them who stand *for* all truth and *against* all error.

Golden Text Explained

1. **All that Would Live Godly in Christ Jesus.** There are two thoughts to be stressed in this section of our text. First, godly living. Those who are determined to live godly, who have set their minds to do so. They have counted the cost; they have determined to deny themselves ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Titus 2: 12.) To live godly means to live like Jesus did.

He was God in the flesh, so in him we see how God would live on this earth. (John 14: 6-10.) They have the same attitude towards the world Jesus had; they hate sin; it is repugnant to them as it was to Jesus; they reprove and rebuke sin in others as Jesus did. They have the same attitude towards righteousness Jesus had; they love it, practice it, suffer for it, and urge others to do the same. People who live godly lives are not negative characters; they are positive and aggressive. It is a part of godliness to refrain from wrong, and it is a very essential part of righteousness to be actively engaged in doing good. The second thought in this section of our text is found in the phrase, *in Christ Jesus*. Those who

would live godly in Christ must first come into Christ. This is done only by obeying the gospel of Christ culminating in baptism into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) There are many who live lives of self-denial filled with good deeds to others. And sometimes they even suffer persecution on account of it. But since they have never been baptized into Christ, they are not in Christ; therefore are not living godly lives in Christ.

2. **Shall Suffer Persecution.** What is persecution? "This may be either an injury done to his feelings, his family, his reputation, his property, his liberty, his influence; it may be by depriving him of an office which he held, or preventing him from obtaining one to which he is eligible: it may be by subjecting him to fine or imprisonment, to banishment, torture, or death. If, in any manner, or in any way, he is subjected to disadvantage on account of his religious opinions, and deprived of any immunities and rights to which he would be otherwise entitled, this is persecution." (Barnes.) Jesus pronounced a blessing upon them who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. (Matt. 5: 10.) Peter said if we

suffer for well-doing we shall be blessed, but if we suffer for wrongdoing it is nothing more than we deserve. (1 Pet 2: 20.) Preachers have been known to abuse audiences with wholesale accusations of dishonesty, impurity of motives, implying indecencies, until the people of the community were so aroused that they closed the doors of public gathering places against the preachers, and even did physical violence to them. This is not the persecution of our text. Faithful uncompromising preaching of the gospel many times brings persecution, and blessed is the preacher who accepts it without reviling or threatening. But when preachers suffer for unright-

eous abuse and false accusations of groups, they have nothing whereof to glory, and there will be no reward for it. While it is wrong to abuse audiences, it is also wrong to compromise the gospel in an effort to keep from contradicting the doctrines and practices of those present. There is a tendency in preachers to soften the commandments, dull the edge of the sword, of the word that they may not lose the friendship of people. In the language of our text this would not be living godly in Christ Jesus. If people would be as active as the apostles in carrying the gospel to others, would there not be as much persecution today as there was in their day, though in different forms?

Exposition of the Text

I. Physical Sufferings (2 Cor. 11: 23-27)

Are they ministers of Christ? There were the false teachers at Corinth who had questioned Paul's apostleship, and they said the fact that he did not accept wages from the church was proof that he realized he did not have the rights of an apostle. He replied that this was a personal matter with him, and no one should take from him the right to glory in preaching the gospel without charge. (Verses 7-10.) Again, they charged that Paul boasted too much about what he had done. They charged him with folly on account of his boasting. In verse 19 Paul makes a most sarcastic statement, that, since the Corinthians received readily such fools and exalted them (as they had evidently done these false teachers who were criticizing Paul) he would boast somewhat so they would receive and love him. It should be noticed that though Paul compared himself with these false teachers on being Hebrews, Israelites, and seed of Abraham, and ministers of Christ, he did not compare himself with them as apostles. He called them false apostles. (Verse 13.) When he asked if they were servants of Christ, he used our word for deacon. It is worthy of notice, too, that when Paul wished to show himself more acceptable to the Lord and worthy of the respect of brethren, he did not boast about family connections, social, or political, or educational achievements:

he boasted on the ground of service to the Lord, and suffering in his cause. Jesus said he that would be great among you, let him be servant of all. (Matt. 20: 26, 27.)

I speak as one beside himself. Paul did not mean that he realized he was not in his right mind; he was speaking from their point of view, especially that of the false teachers who were his enemies. Since they bear with the foolish gladly (verse 19), he will be a fool to accommodate himself to their understanding.

In labors more abundantly. One of the proofs of the divinity of Christianity is the fact that the apostles and many preachers who were witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus labored and suffered so abundantly, even to death, for the privilege of taking the gospel to people who persecuted them. False apostles and prophets did not then, nor do they now, labor unceasingly without pay, nor do they suffer persecution. If a course they have been pursuing becomes unpopular enough to bring suffering upon them, they will immediately change their course. But the apostles of Jesus and true gospel preachers do not change their course given by Jesus to avoid hard work and suffering.

In prisons, stripes, and death. Paul boasts that he had been in more prisons for the sake of the gospel than his critics. Jesus said the enemies of the gospel would put the preachers in prisons (Matt. 10: 16-

23), and in the early days of the church those who were the undisputed apostles of Christ suffered in prisons. (Acts 12: 4.) It follows, therefore, that Paul had a better claim to be a true preacher of the gospel than his critics if he had suffered imprisonment more than they. He had been whipped so many times he had lost count, and says *above measure*. Paul did not mean that he had been dead often, but he had suffered the equal of death; had been exposed to death many times. He said, "I die daily." (1 Cor. 15: 31.) And had it not been for the provident care of God he would have been dead long before this.

Of the Jews five times received forty stripes save one. None of these scourgings are mentioned in Luke's account in Acts. The stripes of the preceding verse may have been from Gentiles, as this verse mentions the Jews as whipping him five times. The legal limit of stripes was forty, and they stopped at the count of thirty-nine lest they might accidentally exceed the limit and be liable to punishment. Barnes says if a whip of three thongs was used, the victim was struck but thirteen times, making thirty-nine stripes. Gentiles were not limited to this number, so Paul said he received stripes above measure.

Thrice was I beaten with rods. These rods are called "vine-sticks" by one writer. They were cured hardwood or willow growth one to two inches in diameter which cut and bruised the flesh. One occasion of such beating was in Philippi. (Acts 16: 22.) Once was he stoned, and that was in Lystra, where he was left outside the city for dead. (Acts 14: 19.) Three times Paul suffered shipwreck, but of these events we know nothing. After this letter was written he was shipwrecked on his way to Home (Acts 28), but that could not be included here. In one of these shipwrecks he had spent twenty-four hours in the sea, holding, no doubt, to some part of the wreckage until he either reached land or was rescued. And he was in journeyings often. In fact he had no home most of the time, but was going from place to place preaching here awhile and there awhile, without the com-

forts of travel we have. Travel in cars and pullmans is wearing on a man, but it is in luxury compared to the mode of travel Paul had to use. This was no little part of his suffering for Christ.

In perils. The word peril means, "Exposure to the risk of being injured, destroyed or lost; a position of jeopardy; danger." (Webster.) He had been in such position in rivers. There were few bridges and rivers had to be forded. He had been in danger of losing his property and life at the hands of robbers who infested the wild country through which he had to travel. It has been guessed that this is one reason why Mark turned back when he did, as that section of country was known to be infested with robbers. (Acts 13: 13.) Both Jews and Gentiles had imperiled Paul, both in the city and in the wilderness and the sea. Even false brethren had been a peril to him. He did not trust himself in the hands of strange brethren lest they prove false, and destroy him. This may have been a covered reference to the false teachers in Corinth.

In labor and travail. Verse 27 changes from the subject of outward physical suffering and danger to that which is inward. Labor and travail refer to the weariness and pain suffered from the arduous work of traveling and preaching under such adverse conditions. There were hunger and thirst, sometimes caused by fasting and sometimes because he could not get food and drink. And there were cold and nakedness at times which added to his suffering. Not one of his critics could say he had suffered so much for Christ.

II. Inward Sufferings (2 Cor. 11: 28-33)

Presseth upon me daily. The Greek word for *presseth* denotes a crowd rushing from all sides upon a person for the purpose of trampling him down. This was not an occasional experience with Paul, it was a daily, a continuous mental burden which he had to bear, and under which he had to carry on his work of preaching. It was with him in his travels; it added to his discomfort when cold, hungry, or in prison.

Anxiety for all the churches. This is the thing which pressed upon Paul

daily. Paul was a true shepherd who cared for his sheep, not a hireling. (John 10: 11-13.) He could not move on from a place where he had converted a number of people and give no further thought to their safety and their growth in grace and knowledge. This must have struck deep in the hearts of the brethren in Corinth who cared for Paul. They had been a grief, a great care to Paul ever since he left them. He expected to find Titus in Macedonia to give him a report as to the condition of the church, and until Titus arrived he says, "Our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." (2 Cor. 7: 5.) But Corinth, though worse than other churches, was just one of the many Paul had to be anxious about. He was afraid he had spent labor in vain on the Galatians.

Who is weak, and I am not weak?

To the weak brother he became weak in sympathy with him. This is the weak brother of Rom. 14. Or if weak is to be given a wider sense to include the faltering, Paul asserts his sympathy for them and his prayers and labors in their behalf.

Who is caused to stumble, and I bum not? When one makes the mistake of going back into worldliness, Paul was so interested in his rescue that he burned with indignation at the cause of his fall, and with zeal to rescue him from the fall. Not only was Paul interested in the churches, but in the individuals. Notice the many personal salutations in his letters.

I will glory in the things which concern my weakness. This is true humility. Paul had as much of family connections, educational attainments, and other things of which humanity loves to boast as any of his critics; but he chose not to boast of these

things; he preferred to boast of his weakness, or that which his enemies cited as weakness. He wept with the sorrowing, burned with indignation when brethren were tempted to sin, and when churches were divided by wolves in sheep's clothing. If these were weaknesses, he would gladly boast of his weakness.

God . . . knoweth that I lie not. Paul had mentioned many things in his catalogue of sufferings which even his friends did not know about. Some of the things happened when and where none of the Corinthians could check up to see if they were the truth. So Paul appealed to God as his witness to the truth of these statements. His appeal was both solemn and reverent. He was willing to meet God on the basis of the truth of his statements.

In Damascus. This incident happened immediately after Paul's conversion. Paul, anxious to repair the damage he had done the church, began immediately to preach. And he grew in strength and confounded the Jews at Damascus, proving that Jesus was Christ. (Acts 9: 22.) The Jews hated him for his apostasy, so decided to kill him. They evidently had men in high places, for they secured the help of the governor, getting him to place a guard about the city, especially at the gates, to take Paul as he entered or left the city. But their plot became known to Paul, and the brethren, whom he went there to persecute, helped him escape "through the wall" Luke says. (Acts 9: 25.) Here Paul says he escaped through a window in a basket. It is significant that Luke does not say Paul was let down *over* the wall, but *through* the wall. These accounts were written by different men at different times, yet there is complete agreement in minor details.

Topics for Discussion

1. The church at Corinth was imposed upon by false teachers; the church allowed these men to cause Paul a lot of anxiety. When strangers, though they claim to be brethren, begin to slander good men, it is time for churches to deal firmly with them. It will save the church some trouble, and save good men from anxiety.

2. How much suffering has the church cost? Who can measure the

suffering of Christ to purchase it and establish it? Who can measure the suffering of the apostles in laying the foundation in various communities? And then there are the many who have suffered outwardly and inwardly to keep the church free from hurtful doctrines and practices. But the church is worth more than all it has cost. How much are we willing to suffer to pass it on?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Contrast man's ways and God's ways, and man's attitude toward God's ways.

What must be done in order to save people from their sins?

Why did the world hate Jesus and his apostles? Has the world changed in this respect?

Is there a tendency in your home church to compromise the truth to make friends with people of the religious world about?

Golden Text Explained

What is godly living? Discuss it negatively and positively.

In what relationship is a godly life profitable?

How is this relationship entered?

Discuss the meaning of persecution.

For whose sake are we to suffer persecution?

How many preachers suffer and yet not be rewarded for their suffering?

Contrast abusive preaching with preaching in love; and firm preaching with compromising preaching.

Physical Sufferings

What situation in Corinth called forth this lesson from Paul?

What is the meaning of the word minister in our text?

Of what did Paul glory? How does this agree with Jesus?

Why did Paul speak as one beside himself? What does this mean?

What is the significance of Paul's more abundant labors?

What was Paul's point in boasting of the number of prisons he had been in?

What did he mean by being in death often?

Tell what you know of punishment by scourging.

Where was Paul beaten with rods? What do you know of this instrument of punishment?

Where was Paul stoned? How many times shipwrecked?

How did travel compare with that today in comfort, in safety?

In what perils had Paul been, and what is the meaning of peril?

What is meant by labor and travail?

Inward Sufferings

What does the word *presseth* denote?

What proof do we have that Paul was a good shepherd?

What proof do we have of Paul's anxiety for the church at Corinth?

In what way was Paul weak?

In what way did Paul burn?

What indication do we have of the humility of Paul?

In what things could Paul have boasted, and how does this attitude strike the average person today? Do they not generally boast in other things?

Why did Paul appeal to God to witness to the truth of his statements?

Tell of Paul's experience in Damascus.

What help did the Jews have to destroy Paul at this time?

How did Paul escape from them?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XI—September 10, 1950

THE CHRISTIAN, A CITIZEN

The Lesson Text

Gal. 5: 13-26

13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.

14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one

to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties,

21 Envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 Meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.

26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"* (Matt. 26: 52.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Micah 4: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

September	4.	M. Lawful to Give Tribute to Caesar (Matt. 22: 15-22)
September	5.	T. Practicing Good Citizenship (Luke 3: 7-14)
September	6. W.	Jesus Pays His Taxes (Matt. 17: 24-27)
September	7. T.	Paul Uses His Roman Citizenship (Acts 22: 22-30)
September	8. F.	Paul Appeals to Caesar (Acts 25: 6-12)
September	9. S.	Higher Powers Ordained of God (Rom. 13: 1-7)
September	10. S.	Prayers to Be Offered for Rulers (1 Tim. 2: 1-7)

TIME.—Uncertain, probably between A.D. 55 and 58.

PLACES.—The place of writing is unknown, though many guesses are made, the most probable being Corinth. The location of the Galatian churches is uncertain, except to say the central portion of Asia Minor.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians of Galatia.

Introduction

The people of Galatia came from the west. About 270 B.C. a migration of Gauls from the west, picking up a few tribes on their way, crossed over into Asia Minor. They were too numerous and warlike to be resisted. They settled in central Asia Minor, and were a disturbing element among the small countries for a long time. The boundaries of their country varied considerably, and scholars are uncertain as to the cities, or districts, included in this letter. Some contend that Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe are to be included. These are cities visited by Paul and Barnabas on their first journey. (Acts 13.) Of this position Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "Geographically this is not impossible, though it seems unlikely that regions called Pisidia and Lycaonia in one place should be called Galatia in another." (Vol. 1, p. 855.) If Galatia does not include these cities, it is difficult to determine when he spent much time with them. The first visit of which we can be sure was during his second journey, about A.D. 51. (Acts 16: 6.) His second visit was during his third journey. (Acts 18: 23.) He was detained among them on his first visit on account of an infirmity of the flesh.

(Gal. 4: 13.) But the account in Acts 16 is worded so as to give us the idea that on that occasion he merely passed through the country on his way to Troas, where he was called over into Macedonia. It is known that the apostle Peter did some work in this same section of the country. His letters are addressed to "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia." (1 Pet. 1: 1.) And he mentions the fact that "our beloved brother Paul" had written to them. (2 Pet. 3: 15.) The Galatian churches were bothered with the question of circumcision more than any to which Paul wrote, and one wonders if Peter's influence among them had anything to do with it. His influence at Antioch was not good, and Paul rebuked him for it. (Gal. 2: 11ff.) And Paul's mention of this mistake in Peter's conduct may have been for the purpose of overcoming a similar influence on the churches of Galatia. If their trouble over circumcision did not come from Peter, it certainly came from Jews associated with him, such as those mentioned as coming from James, and as being those whom Peter feared. (Gal. 2: 12.)

Golden Text Explained

1. Put Up Thy Sword. Several

reasons may be assigned for this advice to Peter. First, it was the wise thing to do under the conditions. The little group of twelve, and maybe a few others, were hopelessly outnumbered, and they could not expect to win a battle without the use of miraculous aid. The sensible thing to do was to submit. Second, if they did fight their way out, how were the plans and promises of God to be fulfilled? It was determined in the counsel of God that Jesus should be crucified (Acts 2: 23), so sooner or later Jesus had to submit to his enemies. Knowing that his hour had come, he tells Peter to offer no resistance. This may be all that Jesus intended by the statement, but commentators have usually seen other lessons at least implied in it. So by implication, at least, we may get the lesson that the cause of Christ is not to be defended or propagated by the sword. By the sword is meant carnal weapons, or earthly means. Paul said "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh." (2 Cor. 10: 4.) Mohammed gained millions of subjects by force. Jesus could have done the same, and even more, but he did not wish to have people subjugated to him by fear of physical torture and death; he wished to win the people to love him. Force does not inspire love, hence there is no place for carnal force in winning souls to Christ. Neither is the church to be defended by the sword, or carnal force. False teachers must be stopped, but exposition, rebuke and reproof are the weapons. (Tit. 1; 2 Tim. 4.) In this connection it will be well to suggest that the cause of Christ cannot be propagated by the carnal means of great, expensive, church buildings, elaborate social functions as part of the program of the church, or anything else of a carnal, earthly, ma-

terial, nature. Preaching and teaching the word, sowing the seed of the kingdom, will do the work; nothing else will.

2. Perish with the Sword. Some

take this part of the text to mean that Jesus meant that this mob which used the sword would perish soon enough in the destruction of the city, so that Peter need not stain his sword with their blood. But the words have more meaning than this, for this is said as a reason why Peter should put up his sword, indicating that if Peter used the sword, he would perish by it. Nations which have come into existence through the use of the sword have perished by it. Within our generation several nations have perished because of their dependence upon the sword. The same is true in the lives of individuals. Those who resort to power to gain their objectives may prosper for a while, but the final chapter in their experiences is a warning to all others. But there is another lesson Christians need to see in these words. Those who use the sword perish with it. This is true in two ways. First, physical death comes to many while they are using the sword. Second, mental attitudes and dispositions are engendered by the use of the sword that kills all that is good and holy in him who uses it. Men cannot rip up the bodies of others with the sword and cultivate the disposition of love, pity, and be kind to others. The "killer instinct" which must be cultivated in men to make them good soldiers is contrary to every principle of love, kindness, pity, mercy, patience, etc., which Jesus teaches his disciples to cultivate. So while using the sword to protect one's physical being, that very sword is killing the soul. Man perishes by the sword which he takes to destroy others.

Exposition of the Text

I. Liberty Is Not License (Gal. 5: 13-15)

Ye *were called for freedom*. The freedom for which they had been called was primarily a freedom from the rites and ceremonies of the law. It was a yoke which the Jews could

not bear. (Acts 15: 10.) The Judaizing teachers among them were telling them they would have to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved, but Paul taught them that they were called for freedom from these things. As a child is

free when he come of age, so they were children while under the law and needed guardians; but in Christ they had reached their majority and were free men. (Gal. 4: 1-7.) But in Christ we are also free from condemnation and guilt of sin. (Rom. 8:

1.)

Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh. Your freedom in Christ is not license to do anything suggested by the lusts of your flesh. There have always been people who have contended that freedom in Christ means freedom from restraint of all law. Paul says we are not under law, but under grace. (Rom. 6: 14.) Here again many think they are not bound by any law of any kind. They forget that the rule of Christ is called the perfect law of liberty. (James 1: 25.) They argue that law is not consistent with liberty. How then can there be a law of liberty? Law is opposed to one's license, not to one's liberty.

Through love be servants one to another. We are bound by the law of love to serve one another, and thus to promote each other's welfare. My freedom in Christ does not permit me to run rough-shod over the rights and privileges of other men. This would do away with the strife and contention which was evident in the churches of Galatia at that time. In loving one another *the whole law is fulfilled.* By this he means that all the law concerning our neighbor is fulfilled in love. If one loves God, he will obey all the laws respecting his relation with God; if one loves his neighbor, he will treat his neighbor right. So love is the fulfilling of all the law.

If ye bite and devour one another. The words *bite* and *devour* give us a picture of wild beasts, or angry dogs, biting and tearing one another's flesh. It is sad that men can act like wild beasts at any time and in any place, but for them to do so in the church and with reference to holy things is unthinkable. Yet contention and division in churches today are often characterized by such actions on the part of many involved. Paul says if we so act, we need not be surprised that we are *consumed one of another.* The Greek word for consume is used only here and in Luke 9: 54 and 2 Thess. 2: 8, and means utter destruc-

tion. The church can bite and devour until it is utterly destroyed. And in some communities that has actually happened.

II. Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5: 16-21)

Walk by the Spirit. There is considerable discussion as to the meaning of the word Spirit in these verses. Some contend it is the regenerated human spirit, and others the Holy Spirit. The latter is more acceptable to this writer. To walk by the Spirit is to live in harmony with the teaching of the Spirit. And certainly those who live by the direction of the Holy Spirit will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The word flesh also has given no little trouble. Some think it is that depraved nature which we inherited from Adam, which involves us in total depravity, and renders us incapable of a good thought, word, or deed, until conversion by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Thayer defines it as follows: "Mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God." It must not be limited to the body as opposed to the mind, or the soul. It is true that the body is the seat of sinful passions, and is the instrument of sin; but the word flesh includes more than the body.

Flesh lusteth against the Spirit. The word lusteth has the sense of fighting, warring. The flesh is fighting against the Spirit, trying to keep it from controlling us; and the Spirit is fighting against the flesh in an effort to keep it from dominating our lives.

That ye may not do the things that ye would. Though the flesh is crucified when we become Christians, it does not die immediately; it lingers for awhile and makes it necessary for us to be watchful lest it gain control. Being Christians and desiring to do only those things pleasing to Christ, yet the force of old habits and the desire of old lusts still lingering within cause us to do things which we would not, or which we prefer not to do. The student should study Rom. 7: 7-25 in this connection.

Led by the Spirit, not under the law. Those who are led by the Spirit are the children of God. (Rom. 8: 14.) Sons of God are freed from the

law. (Gal. 4: 1-5.) The Holy Spirit does not now lead people to keep the ceremonies of the law. These rites were a yoke of bondage from which Christ freed us, and his Holy Spirit will certainly not lead us back into that bondage. But this is far from saying we are under no rule of conduct.

Works of the flesh are manifest. By works Paul means the things the corrupt human nature does, the evils in which it indulges. And they are of such nature as to be manifestly wrong, unchristlike, such as followers of Christ should not even think of doing.

Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness. The first three sins mentioned are sins against chastity. The word fornication is from a Greek word which simply means prostitution—illicit sexual intercourse in general. (Thayer.) Fine spun theories based on the difference between fornication and adultery have no foundation in New Testament usage. Uncleanness is from a word which Thayer says means, "in a moral sense, the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living." And lasciviousness is from a word which means "unbridled lust, wantonness, shamelessness . . . wanton manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females." Webster says the word means anything which *tends* to stir up or produce lewd emotions. It is difficult to see how people can keep from seeing that dancing and petting and public bathing have a tendency to produce such emotions, and are therefore to be classed as lascivious, a work of the flesh. The testimony of dancing masters and of women now living a life of shame to the effect that dancing does have such an effect cannot be treated lightly.

Idolatry, sorcery. These two form a group which may be called sins of irreligion. Idolatry means the worship of false gods. Covetousness is said to be idolatry, because money becomes one's god. (Col. 3: 5.) Some love parents more than they love God; parents sometimes love children more than God. Whatever has first place in one's heart becomes one's god. Sorcery comes from a Greek word which means, "the use or administering of drugs; poisoning, sorcery, magical arts." Macknight says, "Those arts of incantations and

charming, and all the pretended communications with invisible malignant powers, whereby the heathen priests promoted the reverence and worship of their idol gods, and enriched themselves."

Enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings.

This third group of sins has to do with the disposition, attitude of heart, all malignant. The first four words are full and faithful translations of the Greek words, and the student is referred to any standard dictionary for their meaning. The word for factions means "courting distinction, a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts: intriguing for office." The word for parties is our word heresy. It means dissensions arising from diversity of opinions. The sinfulness of it is seen in that men are determined to see their opinion, right or wrong, prevail over others.

Drunkemness, revellings, and such-like. This fourth group has to do with sins of excess. The word revelling means a carousal. "A nocturnal and riotous procession of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking-parties that are protracted till late at night." (Thayer.)

They who practise such things. Emphasis should be put on *practice*. One who through weakness does one of these occasionally, and is then ashamed of his mistake and asks forgiveness, certainly will not be barred from heaven. But one who abandons himself to the practice of one or more of these things cannot go to heaven; he would be unfit for the place.

III. Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22-26)

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. The works of the flesh are things people do while under the influence of the flesh: so the fruit of the Spirit is the result of the influence of the Spirit. The word fruit is in the singular. There are nine things mentioned as fruit. They are not nine

separate fruits; they are nine elements which combine to make a balanced fruit. If one or more be missing, the fruit will not be what the Lord wishes. Love for God and man, for all that is good and heavenly. Joy in our relation to God and Christ, in our fellowship with brethren, in the hope of eternal life, and even in manifold trials. Peace with both God and man as far as is possible. We are to cultivate the art of living in peace with our fellow man, and of bringing peace into troubled situations about us.

Longsuffering, kindness, goodness. Longsuffering describes the attitude of the Christian in trials. Kindness "is a mildness of temper, calmness of spirit, and unruffled disposition, and a disposition to treat all with urbanity and politeness." It keeps us from being cross, crabbed, harsh in our dealings with the family, servants, and dependents. Goodness is active benevolence. To say that a man is good is the highest praise. It is said that Jesus went about doing good. (Acts 10: 38.)

Faithfulness, meekness, self-control. It is required that stewards be faithful. (1 Cor. 4: 2.) Man cannot be perfect, but he can be faithful. Meekness is being mild of temper, a humble submissiveness under trial and provocation. Self-control denotes the self-rule a man has over all evil propensities of his nature. Eating, drinking liquor, sexual indulgence, anger, wrath, malice, and many other things call for self-con-

trol. It does not imply that participation to some extent is right. Unmarried persons exercise self-control by refraining from all sexual intercourse. Some think temperance, as is used in King James version, means one may indulge to some extent, but that he must not drink intoxicating liquors too heavily. If it means this with reference to liquors, does it mean the same with reference to sexual intercourse? Self-control is keeping one's self within the limits of the teaching of the Lord.

Crucified the flesh with the passions. To crucify the flesh is to put it to death as a despised thing. But the death will not be accomplished in a moment; it is a long lingering death. It takes time, determination, self-denial, and even then some of our evil desires will find expression in our lives, and we will have to repent and try again.

If we live by the Spirit ... let us also walk. This is an exhortation for them to be consistent with their profession. They had chosen to live by the rule of the Spirit, and this meant that they would have to make that choice manifest to the world by walking before men in such way as the Spirit directed.

Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another. To be vainglorious is to glory in the vanities of life, such as birth, social position, wealth, and education. To provoke one another means to excite one to evil thoughts or deeds. It is right to provoke others to love and good works (Heb. 10: 24), but not to evil.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

By whom was the province of Galatia settled? Where were they from?

How much territory was included in the province of Galatia?

When did Paul first visit this province?

When was his second visit?

What other apostles worked in that province, and wrote to them?

Are there traces of his influence on the circumcision question there?

Golden Text Explained

Why did Jesus tell Peter to put up his sword?

What relation does the sword have to the cause of Christ?

Contrast Christ with Mohammed as to means used to promote their religions.

What other carnal means do people sometimes use to promote the church?

Is there a tendency to use any carnal means for the growth of the church where you worship?

Who will perish by the sword? What nations have lately proven this principle?

What effect does the use of the sword have on the one who uses it?

Can a person cultivate the killer instinct and the soft graces of Christ at the same time?

Liberty Is Not License

From what are people free in Christ?

Contrast freedom and license. Is law inconsistent with liberty?

In what one word is the law fulfilled?

What is suggested by the words bite and devour, and what is meant by consume?

Works of the Flesh

What is meant by walking by the Spirit?

What is the meaning of the word flesh in our text?

What is the relation of the Spirit and the flesh in us, and what the effect?

Who are led by the Spirit, and what is their condition?

What is the meaning of fornication, and uncleanness?

What is lasciviousness? Name some modern examples of it.

Discuss the sins of irreligion in this text.

Discuss as time will allow the sins of disposition, giving definitions of each.

What are the sins of excess? Are we liable to the sin of revelling in our parties?

What is the penalty for practicing such things?

Fruit of the Spirit

How many elements unite to make the fruit of the Spirit? Why called fruit of Spirit?

What is the Christian to love? In what find joy? And peace?

What is longsuffering? Define kindness, and goodness.

What are we taught concerning faithfulness? Meekness?

What is self-control? In what is it to be exercised?

What is meant by crucifying the flesh and its passions?

What is meant by walking by the Spirit?

What is meant by vainglorious? In what way are we not to provoke one another?

Lesson XII—September 17, 1950

OBEDIENCE

The Lesson Text

Eph. 6: 1-13

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise),

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

5 Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good

thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*” (Eph. 6: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 3: 18-25.

Daily Bible Readings

September	11. M. Israel Exhorted to Render Obedience (1 Sam. 12: 13-25)
September	12. T. Consequence of Israel's Disobedience (2 Chron. 36: 11-21)
September	13. W.....Jesus Teaches Obedience (Matt. 7: 15-27)
September	14. T.....Obedience to God Emphasized (Mark 7: 6-23)
September	15. F.....Eternal Life Promised to Obedient (Rom. 2: 1-16)
September	16. S.....All Classes Taught to Obey (Col. 3: 18-25)
September	17. S.....Consequence of Disobedience (2 Thess. 1: 3-12)

TIME.—Uncertain, perhaps A.D. 62 or 63.

PLACES.—Rome and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Ephesus.

Introduction

That Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians, and that he was in prison at the time he wrote it, will be admitted by all. But whether he wrote the letter during his first or second imprisonment in Home is not certain, though it is generally supposed to be the first. While Paul was in prison at Caesarea he seems to have been inactive. If he wrote a letter to a church, we have no record of it. If he preached to anybody except the guards and rulers, we know nothing of it. But during his Homan imprisonment he wrote several letters. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon were written during his first term; and the letters to Timothy and Titus were written during his second imprisonment. And while in prison in Rome he asked the brethren to pray for him that he might be bold to preach the gospel as he should do it. (Eph. 6: 19, 20.) This indicates that he had the opportunity to preach while in prison. And this accords with Luke's account of his freedom while a prisoner at Rome, being allowed to live in his own hired house and to have gatherings there so he might preach the gospel. (Acts 28: 30, 31.)

The church in Ephesus was established by Paul. (Acts 19.) Some disciple of John the Baptist had been there before him, and had baptized twelve men. When Paul found that they had received John's baptism since Pentecost, he taught them the difference between John's work and baptism and that of the gospel, and then baptized them into the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul stayed in Ephesus over two years, teaching in the synagogue at first, and then in the school of Tyrannus. Two things indicate the success of his work there. First, exorcists were put out of business, and many who had practiced magical arts confessed their deeds and brought their books to a public place and burned them. The value of the books was set at fifty thousand pieces of silver, or about ten thousand dollars in our money. Second, the silversmiths felt the effect of Paul's work so that they raised a cry against him. So many people had seen the truth about God that they ceased to buy images of the goddess Diana, and the silversmiths were in danger of losing their business. Their opposition grew until it was no longer safe for Paul to stay in Ephesus.

Golden Text Explained

1. Children Obey Your Parents.

This language is addressed to children who are old enough to know something of the relationship between parent and child, and to know something about what is right. Since the letter is addressed to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1: 1), we may safely conclude that the children here addressed were Christians. It is the duty of Christian boys and girls to obey their parents. Yet it is a very natural thing for them to disobey that they may be like their companions, go places and do things their parents forbid in order that ^{they} may be with the crowd. It is common for children to feel that their parents do not understand them. It is also a common idea among the youth that their parents underestimate their intelligence and ability to

take care of themselves. They do not realize the need of warning, of guidance, and of protection from evil influences and environments. And when parents insist on overseeing their social activities and companionships, they are inclined to rebel. The laxity of parents in general creates a problem for Christian parents. When the average child is allowed to do as he pleases, and go when and where he pleases, the Christian child wishes to have the same liberties, and thinks his parents are hard and unfair if they stand in his way. The phrase *in the Lord* modifies the word obey, and implies that this obedience is to be for the Lord's sake, because he commanded it. Some take it to mean that children are to obey parents so long as parents do not command them to do things

inconsistent with the Lord's command. Parents have no right to command a child to steal, lie, or do anything else contrary to God's will. This makes a good sense and may be Paul's idea.

2. **Obedience Is Right.** First, according to the nature of things it is right for children to obey parents; it is not natural for parents to obey children. Parents are older, have more knowledge and experience, hence it is right for them to command the child. Next, it is right because the Lord has taught it in every dispensation. The Lord commended Abraham because he commanded his children and his household. (Gen. 18: 19.) In the Jewish law we have the fifth commandment, and many others, such as, "My son, keep the commandment of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." (Prov. 6: 20.) Next, it is right for the sake of the family. When children are disobedient, the home is disorderly. The parents are unhappy and suffer embarrassment before the community. The children themselves suffer because learning to have their

own way in the home, they naturally expect to do the same wherever they go, and their attempts to have their own way among their associates will bring grief and cause them to be shunned. Again, it is right for the sake of the church. Since this is addressed to children who are obligated to obey for the sake of the Lord, we conclude that if they do not obey their parents they will bring the church into criticism and reproach. When young people come toward the front and take part in the worship, are quiet and attentive to what is said and done, both the church and the parents are due praise and commendation. But when the young people group themselves in the rear of the house of worship, are nervous and fretful to get away, disturb the preacher and those around them by whispering, both the church and their parents suffer reproach. Parents who exercise no closer supervision than that, deserve criticism; and elders of churches who will allow such conditions to prevail are not doing their duty. If an elder will sit among them, the disorder will cease.

Exposition of the Text

I. Parents and Children (Eph. 6: 1-4)

Honor thy father and mother. Children honor their parents (1) by obeying them, and they dishonor their parent? when they disobey them. Nothing a child does looks worse than to openly refuse to obey parents.

(2) Children honor their parents by helping them when they are old and in need. Jesus, debating with the Pharisees, illustrated his point about human traditions by saying, God said, Honor your father and mother; but you say, That by which parents may be profited by me is devoted to God, he shall not honor his parents. (Matt. 15: 5, 6.) The situation is, a child had come to age and had plenty of this world's good about him; his parents had grown old, their income had ceased, and they were hungry. They had asked for food, but the child said that **for** which they asked, as a lamb, had been devoted to God, so could not be given to parents to eat. In this **way**, by saying the lamb was devoted, the child escaped the responsibility of helping his parents. **By** their tradition they had given him a way to

escape the duty of honoring parents.

(3) Children honor parents when they show gratitude for what their parents have done for them. They should frequently express their love and gratitude, especially to aged parents who are lonely and hungry for affection.

That it may be well with thee. Honoring father and mother is the first commandment with promise, and that promise is twofold. (1) That it may be well with the child. Life is better, richer, fuller to the obedient child. Honor, praise, commendation, and the approval of God are upon the obedient child, but not upon the disobedient. These things are worthwhile: they are to be sought after, and they come as a reward to the obedient child. (2) That thy days may be long upon the earth. Long life is promised to the obedient. This is not to be taken as the only condition of long life. Some obedient children die young, due to other causes; and some disobedient children live a long time. But obedience tends to longevity, because it spares

the child bad habits, many dangerous situations, and abuses which naturally tend to shorten one's life.

Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. If it is the duty of children to obey, it is right that parents should be careful of their authority to exercise it in such way as will win and retain the love, respect, and confidence of the child. (1) Parents may provoke the child to wrath by unnecessary severity, though the trend of this age is away from severity towards laxity. (2) They may provoke the child to wrath by punishing the child for something today which he has been doing often without punishment. Parents often allow children to do things which are wrong, and then on account of an accumulation of a number of little things, and because of the overtaxed nerves of the parent, the child is punished for some minor incident. This is unjust, and the child knows it. (3) Often parents try to put an old head on young shoulders. (4) It is easier for parents to say. Don't, to their children's desires for recreation and entertainment, than it is to supervise them in things which are right. Following this negative course by force of parental authority will cause children to become discouraged, and in this frame of mind they are receptive to suggestions from those whose moral standards are not proper.

Nurture them in chastening and admonition of the Lord. The word nurture includes both teaching and training, precept and example. It is the duty of parents to teach their children, and then to set before them an example as to how to practice the teaching. The word chastening means discipline. The word admonition refers to instruction. The phrase *of the Lord* denotes the source of the discipline and instruction. It is that which the Lord gives and approves. Parental discipline is not enough in evidence in the average home. Parents who allow their children to grow up in disobedience to them usually live to regret it. It is a sin against both God, and the child, and society.

II. Servants and Masters (Eph. 6: 5-9)

Servants, be obedient. This word servants refers, no doubt, to slaves, though it might well be used of those

who render voluntary service. And since it might be so used, the instruction here is applicable today to employees in their subjection to employers. The Lord did not see fit to teach slaves to demand freedom, not even from Christian masters; but the gospel elevates men above slavery. The gospel works like leaven, not like explosives. If the Lord had directly and immediately outlawed slavery, the gospel would have been such a disturbing element in society that it would have been outlawed in all nations.

With fear and trembling, singleness of heart, as unto Christ. This is not the cringing fear of the coward, but the fear of displeasing the master by not doing his duty well. Singleness of heart implies one purpose, and that to do his master's will. Service rendered a master is as if it were rendered to Christ. Doing good to the poor is the same as if it had been done for Christ. So employees treat Christ just as they treat the employer.

Not in way of eyeservice as men-pleasers. Employees are to work for the employer just as they would work for the Lord. To give eyeservice is to work while the boss is looking and quit when he is not. To give less labor than the employer is due is to steal from him. Christian employees cannot take part in "slow-down" movements which cheat the employer.

Doing the will of God from the heart. This is still instruction to servants as to how they are to treat their masters, employee to employer. Giving the service which is right and proper, whether the boss is looking or not, is doing the will of God from the heart. This includes sincerity; it is from the heart; it is a matter of conscience.

With good will doing service. Slaves were inclined to be sullen and rebellious. Paul teaches them to serve their masters with good will, to be cheerful, willing to do what they are commanded. This service was to be rendered just as if they were serving the Lord, not men. This lifts one out of the worldly ways and motives in the drab affairs of everyday life, and lends dignity to the position of even the slave. Whether the master knows it or not, and whether any-

body else is cognizant of it, the employee is doing the will of his Lord when he gives good service with cheerfulness, and this makes his lot much easier.

The same shall he receive from the Lord. Slaves were likely to become discouraged when held in slavery because they were not getting what was rightfully theirs in this life. Paul taught them not to look to this life only for rewards. If their lot was slavery, make the most of it. If they were not rightly rewarded here, the difference will be made up in heaven. This made slavery more tolerable to those who had hard masters.

Masters, do the same things, forbear threatening. The expression, *same things*, means that masters are to treat the slaves just as they would treat Jesus. If they would free Jesus, it would be their duty to free their slaves; if they would hold Jesus in slavery but treat him kindly, then it was their duty to be kind to their slaves. Thinking along this line would soon cause a man to set free his slaves, and that is the purpose of such teaching.

Both their master and yours is in heaven. This of course applies only to masters who were Christians. Christ is the master of all, whether bond or free, and with him there is no respect of persons. He will not be lenient in judgment to the rich and be hard on the poor, lenient on the master and hard on the slave. All will be judged on the same basis. In view of that judgment masters are to treat their slaves as they wish to be treated by their Lord in judgment. This tended to make the lot of slaves easier.

III. Exhortation to Fight Against Sin

(Eph. 6: 10-13)

Be strong in the Lord. This is his final exhortation. He has been giving each class its respective duties, but now he puts them all in one class. All of them will need strength to do what he has taught each is his duty. This strength is found in the Lord, and it may be theirs by maintaining their relationship with him. His might is conveyed to us by means of our faith and trust in him. Such was Paul's trust in him that he felt confident he could do all things

through Jesus Christ who strengthened him. (Phil. 4: 13.) And we find that it is the inward man who receives this strength from the Lord. (Eph. 3: 16.)

Put on the whole armor of God. We are not able to stand alone; we need something which only God can supply. The soldier cannot fight, or long endure in battle, without the armor his captain supplies. So we need the whole armor of God. Let no one think he can get along with a part of it; God knows best and we should be careful to take all he offers.

To stand against the wiles of the devil. The word for devil here means *false accuser, slanderer*. The word for wiles, if spelled with English letters, would be *method*. So it means that which is methodized, worked out according to method, skill, cunning. The devil works methodically, cunningly, for our downfall. For this reason we will need all the armor God supplies, and we will have to avail ourselves of the strength he promises if we expect to win in this fight.

Not against flesh and blood. Our fight is not with our equals, hence the need of help from above. We fight against principalities, powers, etc. Since these are placed in apposition to flesh and blood, we conclude that all these terms refer to evil spirits. They are said to be in *heavenly places*. They are called the "powers of the air" (Eph. 2: 2), hence we understand heavenly places to be in the space above us. Since the devil is wiser than man, more powerful than man, more experienced in tempting man than we are in resisting, and since he is not restricted by a conscience or regard for our good, but is eagerly seeking whom he may destroy, we are manifestly dependent upon God to give us the victory. However he will not give us the victory unless we put forth every effort possible, and take advantage of all that he supplies.

Abie to withstand in the evil day. The evil day is the day one is assaulted by the devil and his angels; it is the day of temptation. By taking the armor of God we shall be able to stand, but in our own strength and by our own wisdom, we cannot hope for victory.

Topics for Discussion

1. The problem of juvenile delinquency is generally admitted to be a problem of parental irresponsibility. Parents allow their children too much freedom, do not give them enough supervision and discipline. Supervised recreation is the answer to the problem, but that is the duty of parents and not the church.

2. Paul's teaching to servants and masters, if followed, would solve our labor-management problems. Servants, employees, would give a full day's work, and employers would

give ample pay and good living and working conditions, if each regarded his treatment of the other as his treatment of the Lord himself.

3. The devil and his angels are real, though not physical. They are determined upon our destruction, and are working night and day to accomplish that end. They go about methodically, taking every advantage their superior wisdom and experience give them. Were it not for the restraining power of God, we would be helpless in our fight against them.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus?

How did his imprisonment at Caesarea differ from that of Rome?

What does Luke tell us of Paul's condition in Rome?

What do you know of Paul's first contact with the church in Ephesus?

How long did Paul stay with the church at Ephesus?

What two events indicate the success Paul had in Ephesus?

Golden Text Explained

To what kind of children is our text addressed?

Name and discuss as many things as you can which cause children to disobey parents.

What general condition makes it hard for Christian parents to control their children?

What is the meaning of the phrase "in the Lord"?

Give and discuss the reasons given why it is right for children to obey parents.

Parents and Children

Name and discuss three ways in which children honor their parents.

What two reasons are given why it is well for children to obey parents?

What direction is given to fathers concerning their children?

In what ways may parents provoke their children to wrath?

What is the meaning of the words nurture, chastening, and admonition?

What is the meaning of the phrase "of the Lord" in this verse?

How necessary is the proper training and discipline of children?

Servants and Masters

Who are included in the term *servants*?

Why did Jesus not forbid slavery? How does he rid the world of slavery?

In what attitude of mind should servants do their work?

What is eyeservice? Can employees render such today?

What is meant by doing the will of God from the heart?

How does Paul indicate the disposition of heart in which servants are to work?

To whom can the mistreated servant look for adjustment?

What is meant by *the same things* which Paul requires of masters?

What do the servant and master have in common?

Why would this tend to make the lot of the slave easier?

Exhortation to Fight Against Sin

What is meant by being strong in the Lord?

What does God supply to help us stand in this fight?

What is the meaning of the word devil?

What is meant by the wives of the devil?

What are the principalities, powers, etc.?

What are the heavenly places? Who are said to dwell there?

What advantage does the devil have over us?

What is the evil day?

In what can we place our hope of victory over the devil?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XIII—September 24, 1950

CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION

The Lesson Text

Phil. 1: 12-26

12 Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prae-to'-ri-an guard, and to all the rest;

14 And that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

16 The one *do it* of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel;

17 But the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.

18 What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Je'-sus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expect-

tation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if to live in the flesh,—*if* this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not.

23 But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better:

24 Yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith;

26 That your glorying may abound in Christ Je'-sus in me through my presence with you again.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”* (Matt. 22: 37.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Psalm 139: 1-12.

Daily Bible Readings

September 18. M..... Saving the Soul by Losing It (Matt. 16: 21-28)
 September 19. T..... Taking Up His Cross (Mark 8: 27-38)
 September 20. W..... Leaving All to Follow Jesus (Luke 9: 57-62)
 September 21. T..... Forgetting Things Behind (Phil. 3: 1-16)
 September 22. F..... Seeking Things Above (Col. 3: 1-17)
 September 23. S..... Let Us Watch and Be Sober (1 Thess. 5: 1-11)
 September 24. S..... Priesthood Consecrated to God (1 Pet. 2: 1-12)

TIME.—A.D. 63.

PLACES.—Rome and Philippi.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Christians at Philippi.

Introduction

It is granted by all that the epistle to the church at Philippi was written by Paul from Rome while he was in prison. Mention of the praetorian guard (1: 13), the salutation from Christians in Caesar's household (4: 22), and the mention of his bonds several times, all point to the fact that the letter was written from prison. That it was written during his first imprisonment has been doubted by some, but the evidence for the first imprisonment is conclusive. At the time Paul wrote this letter Timothy was with him (1: 1), so was Epaphroditus (4: 18), he had all things, and was filled. (4: 18). But at the time of his second imprisonment only Luke was with him,

and he was hoping Timothy would come shortly and bring some much needed supplies. (2 Tim. 4: 9-13.) From this we see that Luke was with him during his second imprisonment, but surely he was not with him when he wrote Philippians, or Luke would have sent greetings to a church where he had labored. Again, when Paul wrote Philippians he expected to be released shortly (Phil. 2: 24), but there is no such note in the letter written during his second imprisonment.

The church at Philippi was Paul's joy, and his beloved. (Phil. 4: 1.) He commends them for many things, but finds nothing for which to rebuke them. He warns them concern-

ing the matter of circumcision (Phil. 3: 1-6), but does not suggest that they were having trouble over it. Some women in the church differed about some matters, and Paul exhorted them to be of the same mind (Phil. 4: 2), but did not think it serious enough to justify a rebuke. The church had kept in touch with Paul, had sent to him "once and again"

while he was in Thessalonica. (Phil. 4: 16.) Their fellowship began the very first day when Lydia constrained him to abide in her house (Acts 16: 15; Phil. 1: 5), and ceased only because they lacked opportunity. (Phil. 4: 10.) But when they heard he was in prison, they sent Epaphroditus with money and supplies. (Phil. 4: 18.)

Golden Text Explained

1. Greatest Love Demanded. God demands first place in our hearts and lives. He wants us to love him more than we love anybody or anything else. We must love him with *all* our heart. To love God with all the heart means to make him the supreme object of our affections; to enthrone him in our hearts above all others, and to be willing to give up all others to go through life without their love and respect before we would cease to love and serve God. We must love God with *all* our soul. This means we are ready to sacrifice life for him, for soul means life. We are to love God so much that we will endure hardships, meet temptations bravely, and wear out our lives in his service. And we must love God with *all* our mind. This means we are to have him continually in our thoughts, to meditate on his word day and night; it means we will think of his goodness to us, and that we will search for ways to show our love for him. "In a word, he who sees God in all things, thinks of him at all times, having his mind constantly fixed upon God, acknowledging him in all his ways, who begins, continues, and ends all his thoughts, words, and works, to the glory of his name: this is the person who loves God with all his *heart, life, strength, and intellect*"

2. God's Right To Demand Such Love. Seeing there are so many things and persons who deserve and are worthy to be loved, why does God have a right to demand such love, and be jealous to ask that we love him in such way? First, he is our creator. We are indebted to him for life, and hence for all the joys and blessings of life. Second, he preserves us in good health of mind and body, giving us our daily bread, raiment, shelter, and everything which is necessary to our well-being, so that if we derive any pleasure from these

things we ought to love him who supplies them. Third, when man had sinned and was condemned to die on account of his sins, God so loved him that he gave his only begotten Son to die in man's place that man might not be destroyed, but have eternal life. This is the greatest manifestation of love the world has ever known. It gives him the right to demand of us our greatest love. Fourth, he is preparing mansions in the sky for all who will love him supremely. Fifth, he protects us from Satan here, not allowing him to tempt us above that we are able to bear, making it possible for us to live in such way as to be acceptable to him in judgment. He gives us the greatest blessing we enjoy, therefore he has the right to ask of us our greatest love.

3. What This Love Will Do for Us. First, this love ennoble and purifies us; it makes us grow into his likeness. Man has a tendency to grow into the likeness of that which he loves. People who love the world, become worldly. Men who love the dollar will become hard, unmerciful, and unkind, taking from the poor and defenseless to satisfy their lust for gold. So when we love God, we will become holy, for he is holy; **we will** become righteous, for he is perfectly righteous; we will become merciful, patient, long-suffering, and forgiving, for God has these qualities to perfection. Second, this love will cause us to live the best and most profitable life. If we love him, we will keep his commandments. (1 John 5: 3.) Keeping his commandments, we will live a pure life: we will live a busy life doing good to others. No one can love God and neglect to care for the poor. No one can love God and hate his brother. (1 John 3: 17; 4: 20.) Third, this love is our protection against our enemies, the world, the

flesh, and the devil. If we love God **with** all our hearts, souls, and minds, **there** will be no love left for our **enemies**. The greater the love we **have** for God, the more we will hate **the world, the flesh, and the devil**.

We cannot love God and mammon, so loving God with all our being keeps us free from the love of our enemies. So God's demand is not on account of selfishness on his part, but he so commands us for our own good.

Exposition of the Text

I. Blessings in Disguise (Phil. 1: 12-20)

The progress of the gospel. All good people, and especially Paul's dearest friends, were sorry that he had been imprisoned. They hated to see a good man suffer unjustly. And besides that they thought it would mean that he could not preach the gospel. It was too bad that such a good man, and such a powerful preacher should be shut up in prison when there were so many people in the world who needed the gospel. But Paul comforted his friends by telling them his imprisonment had fallen out rather to the progress of the gospel, than to the hindrance to it.

My bonds became manifest in Christ. By this Paul means that the truth as to the cause of his imprisonment had become known to many. He was suffering on account of his relation to Christ, because he preached Christ. The guards learned that he was not an evil man; they knew he was there because the Jews hated him, and this caused them to sympathize with him, and to give him the very best treatment it was possible for guards to give a prisoner. This would be comforting news to the Christians at Philippi who loved him so dearly.

The whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest. The meaning of the word *praetorian* is uncertain. Some contend that it included Caesar's palace, and therefore his household as well as the soldiers which constituted his special guard. If this is true, it throws light on why he was released the first time, and it explains why there were Christians in Caesar's household to send salutations to Philippi. (Phil. 4: 22.) The expression *all the rest* would include all who were in any way connected with Paul while he was in prison. This would mean that those who came to hear Paul, including Christians and Jews, had come to understand that he was in prison for the sake of Christ.

Brethren more abundantly bold.

Here is one of the blessings in disguise. Instead of making brethren afraid to preach Christ, his imprisonment had given them courage to preach. (1) Since the great apostle was in prison, there was greater need than ever that others get busy preaching. (2) Since Paul had won such favor in the praetorian, brethren felt that they could preach Christ freely without having to suffer for it. (3) From what follows it is clear that some preached the gospel who would not have preached it if Paul had not been in prison, thinking to add to his sufferings.

Some preach Christ of envy, some of good will. (1) It is to be noticed that these men preached Christ, they preached the word of God. (Verse 14.) They did not preach a perverted gospel, for if they had done so Paul would not have called it "the word of God," nor would he have rejoiced at the preaching. (Verse 18.) But (2) they preached of envy and strife, that is, because they envied him and wished to stir up strife. How this was done is not clear. Probably they preached that Jesus is the Christ, a king, thinking to make the Romans fear that Paul had hopes of overthrowing the Roman government, and so *raise up affliction* (verse 17) for him.

Knowing I am set for the defence of the gospel. Those who preached of good will for Paul, did so because they loved him, and wished to help him in his defense of the gospel. They knew it would be a source of comfort to him to know that he had emboldened them to preach, and that he would rejoice to know that his influence was helping to save souls. Paul was set for the defense of the gospel. This suggests that the gospel needs to be defended. As long as men pervert the gospel, it will need defenders. Preachers who are afraid or ashamed to defend the gospel are not worthy to stand in the pulpit.

Brethren who think they are too pious, too sweet-spirited, to defend the gospel against perverters are too soft to be counted among the friends and helpers of Paul who was set for its defense.

Christ is proclaimed, therein I rejoice. Denominational preachers often use this to justify preaching of conflicting and contradicting doctrines. They think these men of whom Paul speaks were doing that, and yet Paul said he rejoiced in it. But Paul plainly says that Christ was preached. One cannot preach Christ by preaching false doctrines. One has to preach the truth to preach Christ. One may preach Christ from impure motives, but he cannot, by use of human traditions, preach Christ.

This shall turn out to my salvation. Whether salvation here means deliverance from prison, or his eternal salvation is not clear. Commentators are about equally divided on it. But, as Lightfoot suggests, Paul expects this salvation whether he lives or dies (verse 20), so it can hardly refer to his deliverance from prison. The trials of imprisonment, and those which his enemies hope to add to his present condition, will develop the spiritual life of Paul, they will only pave his road to glory. Through great tribulation we are to enter the kingdom, and Paul knew that his trials would turn out to his salvation.

Your supplication and supply of the Spirit of Jesus. The prayers of the Philippians meant much to Paul. The supply of the Spirit of Jesus may mean either the Spirit which was supplied to Paul, or it may mean the blessings supplied through the Spirit. It seems best to accept the latter. Notice that the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of Jesus, instead of the Spirit of God. But since the Holy Spirit proceeded from Jesus as much as from God, and since Jesus is said to have sent the Spirit, it is well to use the term Spirit of Jesus. Paul uses other terms as Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8: 9), Spirit of his Son (Gal. 4: 6), spirit of adoption (Rom. 8: 15). Peter also uses the term Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1: 11.)

Christ shall be magnified in my body. Paul was determined to magnify Christ in his body. If he lived, he would magnify Christ by preach-

ing his gospel, saving souls, and setting for them the right example. Whether in prison or released to go again to places where the gospel had never been preached, his life would be so devoted to Christ as to magnify him. But if the decision of Caesar should result in his martyrdom, he would be sustained by the Lord, and the prayers of the saints, so as to die courageously, -and so magnify Christ. If all were as much determined to magnify Christ, the church would be stronger and more active.

II. The Christ-centered Life (Phil.

1: 21-26)

To live is Christ, to die is gain. Paul was so determined to magnify Christ that living could mean only that. His life was Christ-centered; he was so consecrated and devoted to Christ that his thoughts, words, and deeds were all for Christ and unto Christ. But if he should not be permitted to live, death would be a gain to him. In death he would be released from the body of suffering, the evils and dangers of temptation, the sorrows caused by beholding the wickedness about him, and the suffering caused by unfaithful brethren. The reader is requested to read "Golden Text Explained," Lesson VIII, August 20.

But if to live in the flesh. The language of this verse is rather indefinite, and difficult to understand. Lightfoot says, "The grammar of the passage reflects the conflict of feeling in the apostle's mind. He is tossed to and fro between the desire to labor for Christ in life, and the desire to be united with Christ by death. The abrupt and disjointed sentences express this hesitation." To live in the flesh would mean a continuance of suffering, and this Paul naturally dreaded. But if his suffering would bear fruit to the glory of God and the magnifying of Christ among men, he hardly knew which course to choose. So much did he desire to rest from trials and sufferings that he hardly knew if he preferred to live or die. The only thing which could possibly induce him to wish to live would be to magnify Christ to whom he was so devoted and consecrated.

I am in a strait betwixt two. To be in a strait means to be in a difficulty: he was hard-pressed to make a decision. One thing was to depart and be with Christ, the other to live and labor through much tribulation for Christ. Of the first he said it is very far better. Why? (1) The Christian at death goes to be with the supreme object of his love. (2) Suffering is ended and eternal supernatural peace and happiness begin.

(3) We may learn from this that the soul does not go out of existence, nor rest in unconsciousness, between death and the resurrection, since Paul says death means going to be with Christ, and that it is better. Surely going into such a state is not better than living for Christ. (4) Some take this to mean that there is no intermediate state for the soul, that it goes into heaven since Christ is there, and it cannot be with Christ without being where he is. But this does not necessarily follow, for in Solomon's day it was said the spirit returns to God who gave it (Eccles. 12: 7), and yet all allow an intermediate state at that time.

To *abide in the flesh is needful for your sake.* Here in these verses we have material which destroys the doctrines of materialists who do not believe in conscious existence between death and the resurrection. (1) Something abides in the flesh. (2) At death it ceases to abide in the flesh.

(3) At death it goes to be with Christ, which is very far better than abiding

in the flesh. (4) If that something abides in the flesh it can render a service to the living. On the other hand there are "Spiritualists" who claim the spirit can render service to people on earth after it departs from the flesh. Paul had the idea that he had to abide in the flesh to be of service to people on earth. If he could have been free from the sorrows and suffering incident to abiding in the flesh, and could have served brethren at the same time, there would have been no difficulty in making a choice in what he would do.

1. *know that I shall abide.* This is to be taken as the language of confidence, and not of absolute knowledge by inspiration. He makes a similar statement in Acts 20: 25 that they would not see his face again, yet it is very probable that he was in Ephesus after that. (1 Tim. 1: 3.) (See "Life and Epistles of Saint Paul," by Conybeare and Howson, p. 809.)

For your progress and joy in the faith. Paul views Christians as making progress both in faith, and in the joy which comes through that faith and the exercise of it. With him there was no standing still; one was either progressing or backsliding. He wished to contribute to their progress, that they might have more reason to glory in him. His presence with them once more would be a joy to him, and matter for glorying in Christ on their part.

Topics for Discussion

1. We are so short-sighted that we often think our condition and surroundings make it impossible for us to do good, when the truth is those very conditions contribute to our ability to do good, and furnish us unusual opportunities to do good. We should pray for wisdom to see opportunities, and for courage and strength to use them all for Christ.

2. Every life should be Christ-centered. "The glory of Christ ought to be the end of our life, the grace of

Christ the principle of our life, and the word of Christ the rule of it." (M. Henry.)

3. To serve and glorify Christ in the body, whether by life or death, is the highest aim possible. This idea should be instilled into the minds of children. Too many of them are encouraged to make movie stars, athletic stars, or great political figures their heroes, instead of apostles and great preachers.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Who is the writer of this epistle?

Give reasons why the letter was written during his first imprisonment at Rome.

What was Paul's conception of the church at Philippi?

What had the church done for Paul?

Golden Text Explained

What does God demand of us?

What does it mean to love God with all the heart?

What is meant by loving God with all the soul?

What does it mean to love God with all the mind?

Give and discuss four reasons why God has the right to demand such love.

Name and discuss three things such love will do for us.

Blessings in Disguise

Why did Paul's friends sorrow on account of his imprisonment?

What view did Paul take of his imprisonment as related to the gospel?

What effect did Paul's bonds have on the guards and others associated with him?

Did Paul have friends among Caesar's household?

Why were brethren emboldened by Paul's bonds, to preach Christ?

What motives did the preachers have for preaching Christ?

What proof do we have that they preached the truth?

For what was Paul set, and why does the gospel need to be defended?

Is it an indication of piety to refuse to defend the gospel against perverters?

Would Paul rejoice in the preaching of error?

How did this preaching turn out to Paul's salvation?

What part did the prayers of the saints have?

What is meant by the supply of the Spirit?

To what does the term "Spirit of Jesus" refer?

How was Christ magnified in Paul's body? Is he magnified in your body?

The Christ-Centered Life

What is meant by the expression "to live is Christ"?

Why is it gain to die? And how many of us feel that way about death?

What did a continuance of life in the flesh mean to Paul?

What only could induce Paul to wish to continue to live in the flesh?

What was the strait in which Paul found himself?

Why is it better to go on to be with Christ?

What do we learn of the soul from this language?

Does this prove that there is no intermediate state today?

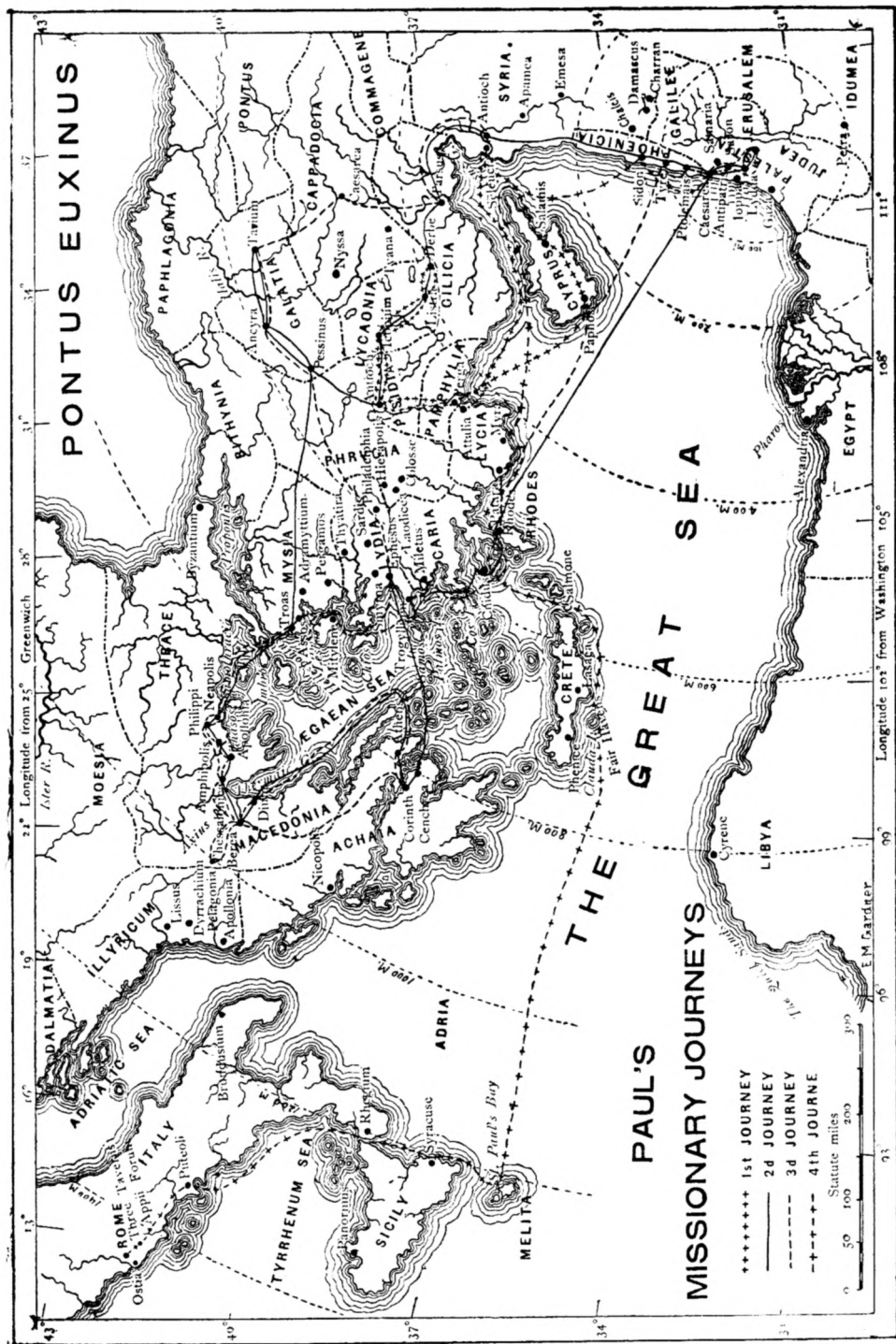
What lessons do you learn from Paul's statement about abiding in the flesh?

How did Paul express his confidence that he would live?

What would his life mean to the brethren?

What was Paul's conception of progress, and in what were they to make progress?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?



FOURTH QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES

Last Half

AIM.—To study the manner in which the Holy Spirit led the inspired writers of the Epistles to send letters of counsel and exhortation to Christian groups; to acquaint the pupil with the purpose and content of these letters, and to help him live in the light of their teaching.

Lesson I—October 1, 1950

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

The Lesson Text

Phil. 2: 5-11; 1 Pet. 2: 21-25

5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Je'-sus:

6 Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name;

10 That in the name of Je'-sus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* under the earth,

11 And that every tongue should

confess that Je'-sus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“B? *ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ*
(1 Cor. 11: 1.)

Devotional Reading.—Phil. 2: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

September 25. M.....	Our Example in Rebuking Error (Matt. 15: 1-20)
September 26.	T. Our Example in Kindness to the Erring (Luke 7: 36-50)
September 27. W.....	Our Example in Compassion (Matt. 20: 29-34)
September 28. T.	Our Example in Forgiveness (Luke 23: 33-38)
September 29.	F. Our Example in Meeting Temptation (Luke 4: 1-13)
September 30. S.....	Our Example in Obedience (Matt. 3: 13-17)
October 1.	S. Our Example in Prayer (Matt. 26: 36-46)

TIME.—A.D. 63 for Philippians, and A.D. 64 or 65 for 1 Peter.

PLACES.—Rome and Philippi for Philippians, and Babylon and Asia Minor for 1 Peter.

PERSONS.—Paul and the church at Philippi: Peter and the saints of Asia Minor.

Introduction

Since the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, and his ways are higher than our ways (Isa. 55: 9), it is necessary for us to have examples to show us how to put his teaching into practice. A child may memorize a rule in arithmetic, yet never know how to work one problem. But if the teacher works a problem on the board showing how to interpret the rule, the child will be able to follow the example in working other similar problems. So Jesus, the great teacher, would have done only half his duty if he had given us the rules of life without showing us how to interpret these rules in every day life. He showed us how to obey the Father when he submitted to John's baptism. Though John baptized for the remission of sins, and Jesus had never sinned, yet he said it was necessary for him to fulfill all righteousness, or to obey every righteous command. He showed us how to treat the penitent sinner; he showed us how to be interested in the lost (Luke 15); and he showed us how to forgive people when they have done us wrong. He taught us, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy, and then he showed us how to be merciful to others. (Matt. 15: 21ff.)

Jesus met temptation as a human being. He exercised mercy, forgiveness to people who had done him wrong, and kindness to people in need, without the aid of his divine nature. If he had lived his life by aid of his divine nature, he would not be an example to us. But since he set examples in his human nature, human beings can take courage in the thought that since Jesus, the human—the man—set the examples, we can follow them. Though we may never be able to follow all of them perfectly, we may live in hope of mastering a few of them.

We have an account of but little more than three years of the life of our Lord, and nothing like all of that time can be accounted for. (John 21: 25.) Yet in this brief time Jesus taught the principles of Christianity and by word and deed showed us how to apply these principles in our daily life. How he could teach so much and show by example how to live by that teaching is the marvel of the ages. No other being ever accomplished so much, regardless of how long he lived, and certainly no one ever did so much in so short a time.

Golden Text Explained

1. Imitators of Paul. Most men are followers; there are but few leaders. For this reason Jesus set examples for all, and in addition gave us the examples of great and good men to help us apply his teaching in our lives. It is human to follow others. Even leaders of some have greater men to whom they look for guidance. Paul was not independent in this matter, for he looked to Christ. Realizing that it is human to follow, and that humanity derives a lot of help and encouragement from following an example, Paul exhorted people to follow him. (1) This involves much responsibility. Followers are not always careful to determine whether their leader follows Christ or not; most people follow blindly. This being true, the leader has a grave responsibility to set right kind of example. (2) This demands courage. The first man to cross a river, a

wilderness, or an ocean must have more courage than is needed in the second man to accomplish the same thing. So the man who interprets the teaching of Christ in his life and sets an example for others is pioneering in the realm of faith, in the spiritual realm, and in this as in other realms it takes courage. (3) This requires anxiety for the good of others. Some one has said that there are but two types of men who could ask people to imitate them. They are the self-admirer who thinks too well of himself, and the one who is so anxious about the welfare of others that he will live for them, serve them, and show them how to live. Paul certainly did not have too high opinion of himself; he was anxious for the welfare of others. (Rom. 12: 3.)

2. Christ the Example of All. We are told not to imitate that which is evil, but that which is good. (3 John

11.) So even if an apostle were to do something not in harmony with the teaching and example of Christ, we would be obligated to refuse to follow his example. Peter made such a mistake at one time. (Gal. 2: 11ff.) We are prone to think that anything a good man does is right. The Bible records the actions of both good and bad men. And it tells us both the good and bad in individual lives. The sin of David is told with all the minuteness of detail as is the purity of Joseph. The denial of Christ by Peter is told as plainly as is the loving faithfulness of John. (1) This suggests individual responsibility. We cannot hide behind the actions of the one we are following, whether he be prophet or apostle. The one who sets the wrong example will suffer, but so will we if we follow blindly. (2) This suggests the need of independent study. We must know whether Christ would approve of the

actions of our leader, and the only way we can know that is to study his life and teaching until we are thoroughly acquainted with him. Paul did not ask us to follow him where we know Jesus would not go. No good man will ask us to do so. If some one asks us to follow him where Jesus would not go, he is either ignorant or an evil man. (3) This requires courage. To oppose a leader and refuse to follow him, and to warn others against following him requires courage. Paul exercised such courage when he warned people against following the bad example set by Peter at Antioch. (Gal. 2.)

3. **Purpose of Examples.** Examples are given to stimulate activity, and to guide in the application of Christian principles. Paul used the liberality of the Corinthians to get the Macedonians to give, and then used the Macedonians to get Corinth to complete their work. (2 Cor. 8 and 9.)

Exposition of the Text

I. Humiliation of Christ (Phil. 2: 5-9)

Have this mind in you. Paul had just taught a lesson of unselfishness and lowliness of mind, and in this first verse of our lesson he exhorts his readers to have this same mind in them. He wants them to cultivate the spirit of unselfishness which will cause them to look out for the good of each other. And he wants them to be humble so that they will not think themselves better than others. This humble unselfish mind characterized our Lord, so he becomes the perfect example for us in these respects, as in all others. And from this Paul tells of the existence of Christ with the Father, and of his condescension to live on our level and in our nature.

Existing in the form of God. This statement refers to the time before the incarnation of Christ; he existed in the form of God from eternity to the time of his birth by Mary. But what is meant by *the form of God* is difficult to determine. Barnes says it can mean but one of two things, "(1) splendour, majesty, glory—referring to the honour which the Redeemer had, his power to work miracles; (2) nature, or essence—meaning

the same as being." But Macknight rejects both of these and says it means the glorious light in which Deity is said to dwell, and by which he manifested himself to men of old. Whatever it means it must be something which he enjoyed until he became man, and which he did not enjoy while living in the human form, for he is said to have emptied himself of this. It cannot be said that he laid aside his divine nature, for while on earth he was both human and divine. But it seems more in harmony with what we know to say that he, like God, was a Spirit, wholly immortal, but gave up such an existence to become a human being. (John 4: 24; Luke 24: 39.)

Equality with God not a thing to be grasped. It is said that Christ did not count his being on equality with God a thing to be grasped, or held to with tenacity. In this his unselfishness is demonstrated. He was on equality with God and deserved to remain so. But if he remained there, the world was hopelessly lost. Our salvation depended wholly on his willingness to give up his place with God and the form in which he existed, and take upon himself human nature that through death he might de-

stroy the devil. (Heb. 2: 14-17.) This he was willing to do, so demonstrating his unselfishness and humility. The wording of this part of the text is difficult. He counted this not a thing to be grasped. The King James version says "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The idea is that he did not consider his equality with God and his existence in the form of God to be of as great value as the redemption of humanity; his equality with God was not esteemed so highly by him that he would hold on to it—grasp it—while the world perished in sin.

Taking the form of a servant. Christ emptied himself of one form and took upon himself another; he ceased to live as a Spirit wholly immortal, and began to live as a human being, in a mortal form. In this we see the condescension, the lowliness and humility of our Lord.

Being made in the likeness of men. This is explanatory of the statement that he took on himself the form of a servant. Macknight translates it, "Being born in the likeness of men." And certainly it was at his birth that he took the form of a servant. Paul used the same Greek word here which he used when he said Jesus was *born* of a woman, *born* under the law. (Gal. 4: 4.)

He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death. Our Lord was humble not only when he existed in the form of God, but after he took upon himself the form of man he was still humble. He could have lived in wealth and ease and have been served by many, but he was humble enough to live in poverty, work like a slave serving all with whom he associated. The statement that he was obedient unto death does not mean that death was his master and he obeyed death. It means that he obeyed his Father even though his obedience led to his death. Men are sometimes willing to obey God if that obedience does not cost too much in sacrifice and suffering. But Jesus did not let the cost of obedience hinder him at all.

Even the death of the cross. The death on the cross was characterized by (1) physical suffering. It was a lingering death. Men have been known to linger for days before death came. (2) The shame and ignominy at-

tached to death on the cross meant much. It was a form of execution for the vilest, and for all whom the authorities wished to dishonor. (3) The loneliness of that death meant much to Jesus. His disciples left him; his friends were afraid to come near enough to comfort him; and his Father forsook him when he was made to be sin. (Matt. 27: 46; 2 Cor. 5: 21.) In spite of such a death he was obedient.

II. Exaltation of Christ (Phil. 2: 9-11)

Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him. The word *wherefore* suggests that the exaltation is on account of, and as a reward for, his humiliation. It serves, and was so intended by the apostle, to encourage us to the practice of humility since there is great reward for such. The fact that Christ was rewarded for his humility is used by Paul to encourage us to follow his example and receive a similar reward. To what station he was exalted following his death we are not here told, but from other scriptures we learn that he was given to be head over the church (Eph. 1: 22); he was made both Lord and Christ and seated at the right hand of the Father to reign until all enemies are made his footstool (Acts 2: 32-36); he was given to be mediator and high priest over the house of God. (Heb. 8: 1, 2; 9: 14, 15).

Gave unto him the name. The Pulpit Commentary argues that the name referred to cannot be Jesus since it was given him at the time of his circumcision, and this name seems to have been given at his exaltation. But Macknight argues as strongly that it does refer to the name Jesus, which means Saviour, and as such he is exalted above all others. But the term *name* is sometimes used to refer to relationships. As, "He hath obtained a more excellent name than" the angels, for God said to him, "Thou art my Son." (Heb. 1: 4, 5.) The word Son is not his name, but expressive of a relationship. So here it is possible that the word *name* refers to the relationship, or station, to which he has been exalted, as that of Saviour, Mediator, Lord, High Priest.

In the name of Jesus every knee should bow. This simply means that

all beings should recognize his Lordship. This is proof of his divinity. If he is not truly God, it would be idolatry for any one to worship him. But even creatures in heaven as well as on earth are here said to be obligated to worship him on account of his exalted station.

Every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. This is to be said of all creatures the same as of those who bow the knee. Confessing is to be taken in the sense of acknowledging. Angels will not confess unto salvation, for they are already saved, but they will gladly acknowledge him as their Lord. Demons will not confess unto salvation, but they will acknowledge him as Lord and will submit to punishment administered by him. Men may confess his name unto their salvation (Rom. 10: 9, 10), or they may refuse to do so here and then in judgment confess him to their utter destruction. And all, whether here or there, will confess his name to the glory of God. God will be glorified here if we confess him to our salvation; and he will get glory in judgment by the confessions of the wicked, though it will be of no value to the wicked.

III. Footprints of Jesus (1 Pet. 2: 21-25)

Leaving you an example. Peter offers the suffering of Jesus as an example for us to follow. Paul says we will be glorified with him if we suffer with him. (Rom. 8: 17.) Those who live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3: 12.) In this we follow the steps of Jesus who suffered because he did the will of his Father.

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He was tempted in all points like we, yet he did not sin. He challenged his enemies to prove that he ever sinned. (John 8: 46.) When Peter said no *guile* was found in his mouth, he used a word which means "a bait or contrivance for entrapping; fraud, deceit, insidious artifice, guile." (Bagster.)

When he was reviled, he reviled not again. People said he had a de-

mon, that he cast out demons by Beelzebub. But regardless of how ugly they talked about him, he did not return them upon his enemies; rather he fed them when hungry and healed them when they were sick.

When he suffered, threatened not. He could have threatened Pilate with justice if he allowed him to be crucified, but he did not. He could have threatened the Jews with dire punishment for their part in the trial and condemnation, but he shed tears over their unbelief and hardness of heart. All these things are examples, footprints, for us to follow.

Committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Paul tells us not to avenge ourselves, but give place to the wrath of God. Vengeance belongs not to us, but to God. It is our duty to commit all judgment to God, knowing that he will avenge all injustice, as well as reward all suffering and sacrifices. In this Jesus set us an example by committing himself to the Father, and showing kindness and mercy to his enemies.

Bare our sins in his body upon the tree. By the expression, *bare our sins in his body*, Peter means that Jesus suffered the penalty for our sins. He was our substitute, and was treated by the Father as if he were guilty of our sins. In his suffering he made satisfaction, propitiation, for our sins, making it possible for God to forgive us on account of his sufferings.

That we having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness. The primary thought of this statement is that Christ died that we might live unto righteousness; but a secondary idea is that we must die unto sin before we can live unto righteousness. We die to sin when we are buried with him by baptism into death (Rom. 6: 3, 4), and we become alive unto righteousness when we are raised to walk in newness of life.

Ye were going astray like sheep. Without Christ as Shepherd the sheep are scattered and lost, but coming to him who is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls we have salvation.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus showed us how to live and how to die. If we live like he lived, he will be with us in death to take out of that experience the dread

and terror which it holds for all who have not Jesus as their Shepherd.

2. If one who was on equality with God could condescend to die the

shameful and painful death of the cross, surely we should follow in his footsteps enough to stoop to serve, teach, and encourage the lowliest social outcast, regardless of race or color.

3. If all would follow the example of Jesus there would be no more war; there would be no race problem; there would be no labor-management

problems. Men are seeking safety and security in laws passed by congress, in international pacts and covenants. They are overlooking the one unfailing source of world peace. If the money which is spent for arms and forming international covenants could be spent to teach the world of Jesus, we would have better grounds for hope that the world can yet enjoy peace and safety.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Why is it so necessary that we have examples of the Lord's teaching?

How did Jesus set us an example of obedience?

How did Jesus set the example of how to treat a penitent sinner?

In what incident did he show us how to be merciful?

Did Jesus meet temptations by the aid of his divine nature?

Of how much of the life of Jesus do we have on record? Is that record complete?

In what respect does Jesus surpass all other teachers and religious leaders?

Golden Text Explained

Why did Jesus set examples? Why did Paul urge us to follow examples?

Why does setting examples involve responsibility?

In what way does being an example to others demand courage?

Why does setting examples require anxiety for the good of others?

What does John say about imitating good and evil?

To what extent are we to follow others?

Did apostles ever set the wrong example before others?

Name and discuss three things involved in following Paul as he followed Christ.

Discuss the purpose of examples in the Christian religion.

Humiliation of Christ

What is the mind which Paul exhorts us to have?

What is meant by existing in the form of God, and when did Christ do that?

Who is said to have been on equality with

God, and how important did he consider it?

How did Jesus demonstrate his unselfishness and humility?

When did Christ take upon himself the form of a servant?

How was he made in the likeness of men?

What is meant by becoming obedient unto death? Can we do that today?

By what three things was the death of Jesus characterized?

Exaltation of Christ

Why was Jesus exalted? When? To what was he exalted?

What is meant by giving him a name which is above every name?

What is said that indicates that his Lordship will be recognized by all?

Why is this proof of the divinity of Jesus?

What will every tongue do?

In what sense will angels confess him?

Demons?

What is said of men confessing him here?

In the judgment?

How will God be glorified by this acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord?

Footprints of Jesus

What is said about following the example of Jesus in suffering?

What is said of the sinless life of Jesus?

What is the meaning of the word guile?

What example did Jesus set in this matter?

How was Jesus reviled, and what example did he set in this matter?

What example did Jesus set when he endured suffering?

What is meant by Jesus bearing our sins in his body on the tree?

For what purpose did he bear our sins in his body?

When do we die to sin? When do we become alive to righteousness?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson II—October 8, 1950

CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT

The Lesson Text

Phil. 4: 4-13

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice.

5 Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Je'-sus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Golden Text. — *"But godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Tim. 6: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING. — Matt. 6: 25-34.

Daily Bible Readings

October 2. M.....	Content With Food and Covering (1 Tim. 6: 3-10)
October 3.....	T. Contentment in Jehovah's Keeping (Psalm 4: 1-8)
October 4. W.....	Trust in God Brings Contentment (Psalm 37: 1-19)
October 5.....	T. Content With Little in Righteousness (Prov. 16: 1-19)
October 6. F.....	Be Content With What You Have (Heb. 13: 1-6)
October 7. S.....	Let God Carry Your Anxieties (1 Pet. 5: 5-11)
October 8. S.....	Contentment Under Difficulties (Phil. 1: 12-26)

TIME. — A.D. 63.

PLACES. — Rome and Philippi.

PERSONS. — Paul and the saints at Philippi.

Introduction

Sometimes it is good to see the reverse side of a subject that we may better understand the meaning of the subject itself. The opposite of contentment is to be uncertain, insecure, unsettled in mind, and discontent. Discontentment is the source of many sins. It leads men to rob, plunder, and kill. It robs men of happiness, and many times never gives anything to take its place. If discontentment could always be rewarded, there would be some reason for it; but usually it brings on more worries rather than something good. Paul describes those who are not content with their financial condition, who have a great desire to become rich, saying that they "fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. 6: 9.)

There is much unrest and insecurity in the world today. Men are not satisfied with what they have, and they are reaching after more regard-

10 But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.

12 I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want.

13 I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.

less of how it affects the other man. The mind of the average man is set on material prosperity. His idea of happiness cannot be satisfied without material wealth, so he is discontented if he possesses but little. We need to learn what true happiness is. Jesus taught a man that his life did not consist in the abundance of the things he possessed. (Luke 12: 15.) And we need to learn that true happiness and true greatness do not depend on the possession of material wealth. If we can learn this lesson we will find it easier to be content with such things as we have.

Our lesson topic is *Christian* Contentment. There is suggested here the possibility of other kinds of contentment. Some people are content to live in sin, but surely this is not Christian contentment. Others are content to live in filth. If some people were put in a mansion with all bills paid, they would not keep it

clean, nor enjoy it any more than they enjoy living in a shack on the fringe of the city dumping ground. Some are content to live out their lives without ever having anything or knowing anything or doing anything worth while. This is not Christian contentment. Some members of the church do not know enough about the gospel to teach others how to become Christians, and

they are satisfied to live and die in that state of ignorance. They boast that they are content with such knowledge as they now have. This lacks a lot of being Christian contentment. It is down-right laziness and sinful unconcern for the welfare of others, and is about as much unlike Christ as one can well become. If godliness does not accompany contentment, it is not worth much.

Golden Text Explained

1. True Wealth Is Not What We Have. That which we have is temporal. It can be stolen; we can be deceived and cheated; we can invest unwisely and lose it all. And even if we are able to gather a great fortune and keep it as long as we live, we will have to leave it behind when we go into the next world. "For we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content." (1 Tim. 6: 7, 8.) Jesus told us of a rich man whose land produced so much that he had to build bigger barns to hold his goods; and he expected to enjoy his wealth the balance of his days on earth. But God classed him with the foolish, and required his soul that night. Then Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12: 21.) That man was rich in material things, but in poverty as to the true riches. Another rich man was told to sell all he had and give to the poor and he would have treasure in heaven. (Matt. 19: 21.) We envy men who have fine homes, big bank accounts, and lucrative business establishments. The man who has gathered a fortune and is able to retire and travel extensively is considered a great success in life. But this is a gross misconception of true wealth.

2. True Wealth Consists in What We Are. Paul says godliness is profitable in this life and in that which is to come. (1 Tim. 4: 8.) Godliness is God-likeness, or piety. The man who has cultivated a God-like character is the rich man. He has something which will help him as long as he lives in this world, and then he can take it with him as a passport to a better world than this. Godliness will give him title to a finer, more

lasting home than he can buy with all the money in the world. Godliness is "favorable to health of body, by promoting temperance, industry and frugality; to clearness and vigor of intellect, by giving just views of truth, and of the relative value of objects; to peace of conscience, by leading to the faithful performance of duty; to prosperity in business, by making a man sober, honest, prudent and industrious; to a good name, by leading a man to pursue such a course of life as shall deserve it; and to comfort in trial, calmness in death, and immortal peace beyond the grave. Religion injures no one. It does not destroy health; it does not enfeeble the intellect; it does not disturb the conscience; it does not pander to raging and consuming passions; it does not diminish the honor of a good name; it furnishes no subject of bitter reflection on a bed of death. It makes no one the poorer; it prompts to no crime; it engenders to no disease." (Barnes.) Surely the godly man is truly rich in eternal values.

Contentment is a calm, undisturbed disposition of mind; a freedom from worry and anxious care about material things; a state of mind that admits of no murmuring or complaining on account of our station in life. True godliness, godlikeness, includes contentment. But one might cultivate godliness to a great extent in many respects, and yet be lacking in the quality of contentment. One without the other is not best. Godliness *with* contentment is great gain. Godliness without contentment would be a poor advertisement for the Lord. A murmuring, dissatisfied church member, always complaining about having to deny himself of so many things of the world, would certainly not lead very many people to the

Lord. But one who is happy in his religion, content with his lot in life, feels that he has more blessings than

he actually deserves and gives thanks to the Lord always, will lead many to Christ.

Exposition of the Text

I. How to Find Contentment (Phil. 4: 4-7)

Rejoice in the Lord always. People who find their greatest joy and happiness in the possession and use of material things will find it hard to be content without an abundance of them. But people who find their joy and happiness in God and things spiritual can be content with food and covering. So the first thing essential to Christian contentment is to learn to rejoice in the Lord. We can rejoice in the fact that we are his, that we have been redeemed by his blood, and in the assurance that he will care for his own. We can rejoice in the rich provisions of the gospel for our spiritual growth and development. We can rejoice in the fact that he does not leave us alone in time of temptation, but that he will provide a way of escape. (1 Cor. 10: 13.) We can rejoice in the great preparations he is making for our eternal home in heaven.

Let your forbearance be known to all men. The word *forbearance* means "meekness under provocation"; gentleness, mildness; restraint of the passions, soberness of living, and free from all excesses. We are not to put on a show, make a gaudy display, of our good dispositions, but we are to live such a mild, sober, restrained life that others will take notice of it because it is so different from the world. This gentle restrained life is the life of the contented, not of the dissatisfied grasping life which is always reaching after something more of the material things of this world.

The Lord is at hand. This language is capable of two meanings.

1. It may mean that the time of the coming of the Lord is near, at hand. And this coming of the Lord may be understood in three ways. First it might mean his second coming, the coming in judgment. Next it might mean his coming in judgment upon Jerusalem in its destruction. And it might mean his coming for each person to take him by death to his final destiny. 2. These words may well mean that the Lord is near each one

of us to observe his deeds, hear his words, and read his thoughts, and for this reason we should be careful to live as he teaches. Paul certainly did not teach that the second coming of Jesus was at hand. He taught the opposite in 2 Thess. 2: 1-4. Again, if he taught that the second coming of Jesus was at hand, he taught something that was not true, for time has proved that it was not then at hand. The coming of the Lord to destroy Jerusalem could not mean much to the church at Philippi, so we discount that explanation. Hence we conclude that Paul either meant to remind us that none of us have long to live, we may meet our Lord much sooner than we expect; or that he wished to remind us that the Lord is near each one of us to observe and finally to judge us according to our works, good or bad.

In nothing be anxious. To put it in other words, Don't worry about anything. But how can we keep from worrying? First, we are to rejoice in the Lord. Second, we are to be thankful for what we have. Third, we are to pray for what we want. People who are always thankful for what they have rarely ever worry about what they may or may never get. Chronic worry and gratitude do not often, if ever, keep company. One who grumbles, worries, frets, and complains about his lot in life rarely, if ever, stops to count his blessings and give thanks to God for them. If he would count his blessings, he would find them so many and so undeserved that he would quit murmuring and complaining about not getting something.

In everything by prayer and supplication. The word *prayer* is a general term, while *supplication* is more definite and specific; it is a stronger term than prayer; a begging or beseeching God to grant a certain thing. We are to pray for what we want, but we are to ask that his will be done in all matters. If that which we desire is good, and in harmony with his will, we will receive it. But if we do not receive it when we pray,

we are to conclude that it is not God's will, and then we are to cease to desire it. Learning it is not his will should kill the desire we have for a thing, and having lost the desire we are content to do without it.

And the peace of God . . . shall guard your hearts. Paul did not say we will get everything for which we pray, but he does say that we shall enjoy a peace which passeth the understanding. Peace here means a calm, quiet, contentment. If we find our joy in God, give thanks for all we have, ask for all we desire, and get all that is for our good, why should we not be contented? If this does not bring peace to our minds it is because we have our minds on worldly things.

II. Things to Think and Do (Phil.

4: 8, 9)

Whatsoever things are true. Truth is from God. Jesus said, "I am the truth." Satan is the father of all that is false. (John 8: 44.) So we are to love all truth and hate all that is false. There is an emphasis upon the word *whatsoever*. One may be inclined to regard more highly one phase of the Christian life than another. One may be careful about his forms of worship, but careless about his moral or business principles. But Paul would say *whatsoever* is true is to be given consideration.

Whatsoever things are honorable. Whatever there is in society which is worthy of respect and regard; whatever in the business world is right and worthy of our respect; whatever there is in men, whether king or beggar, which is worthy of our commendation, we are to recognize these things and have proper respect for them. Christians are to be known in their community as people who stand for that which is right and honorable. It should never be a question in the minds of people where Christians stand on any moral issues.

Whatsoever things are just. The word *just* refers to the character of our dealings with other people. We are to be just, righteous, in our transactions; we are to deal equitably. Our dealings must be above reproach, so as to give no occasion to the enemy to blaspheme the good name of the church on our account. People will criticize us quicker and more severely

for unjust dealings than they will for being unfaithful to attend church.

Whatsoever things are pure. This word suggests that which is chaste in our dealings, especially with the opposite sex. Paul said for Timothy to treat the older women as mothers, the younger as sisters "in all purity." (1 Tim. 5: 2.) Our relations at all times and in all situations should be free from impurity and insincerity.

Whatsoever things are lovely. This suggests that which is amicable, pleasing, and agreeable. A Christian is not to be "sour, crabbed, irritable in his temper."

Whatsoever things are of good report. Those things which are commonly accepted as being right and gracious, such as courtesy in our social relationship, kindness in our treatment of the unfortunate.

Think on these things. These are the things which are virtuous and praiseworthy; these are the things which are to fill our minds. What do you think of when you are alone? On what do you meditate? These things determine your character. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The things we think about today are the things we will be doing tomorrow.

The things you learned, received, heard and saw in me, do. Here are the things we are to do in life. We are to do what Paul taught and practiced. He preached the whole gospel. (Acts 20: 27.) He says for us to imitate him as he follows Christ. (1 Cor. 11: 1.) So it is our duty to do what Paul taught and practiced. It is common today for men of learning to say that the gospel as preached by the apostles was good for people of the first century, but we must have a more modern gospel for modern people and problems. But additions or changes of any kind will but pervert the gospel and make it void. (Matt. 15: 1-9; Mark 7: 13.) Paul adds a blessing to all who will do as he taught, and that is that the God of peace shall be with him. But for the one who goes beyond the teaching of Christ through the apostles we are told that he forfeits the fellowship and communion of God. (2 John 9.)

III. The Secret of Contentment (Phil.

4: 10-13)

You have revived your thought of me. When Paul first went to Philippi

the people were good to him (Phil. 1: 5); in Thessalonica they sent once and again to his needs (Phil. 4: 16); but he had been so far away from them that it was difficult for them to keep in touch with him. However when they knew he was in prison, they sent Epaphroditus all the way to Home with supplies for him. (Phil. 4: 18.)

The word *revived* is used of flowers which revive and regain their color after a rain. Their lack of help was not because they did not care for Paul, but it was because they lacked opportunity. Part of the time they did not know where he was. It was a long distance to Rome, and it was hardly possible for them to send things so great a distance very often. So the coming of one of their number with supplies for him made him all the more grateful for their love.

I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry. In whatsoever state Paul was, he had learned to be content. If he had plenty, he was thankful; if he had nothing and suffered from hunger, he could still rejoice in his possession of Christ and the hope of eternal life with him. The words, *I have learned the secret*, are the translation of one Greek word, and mean that he had been instructed in mysteries, or initiated into the mysteries. Those who had

been initiated understood, but the uninitiated did not understand. Through long experience, through much suffering, and prolonged persecution, Paul had been initiated into the mystery of contentment. He had learned to abound and be thankful for plenty; he had learned to suffer hunger, cold, and nakedness, and be grateful for life and the opportunity to serve his Lord. Contentment under adverse conditions and circumstances is a deep, dark secret to some people. Their state or station in life determines their mood. If all is going well, they are happy; but it reverses come and they do not get their way in most everything, they are very unhappy, and make others so with their murmuring.

I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me. Paul does not mean to intimate that he can move a mountain, or stop a landslide. But *all things* are to be interpreted in the light of the context. He can be content in all circumstances; he can bear all trials; he can perform all duties required of him. But he was not boasting, for he realized that he was not able to do all things in his own strength. He was depending on strength which the Lord would supply. Too many deprive themselves of this help because they never ask for help.

Topics for Discussion

1. Worry is a sin. It is an indication of a lack of trust in God to fulfill his promises. When we worry we act like orphans who have no Father in heaven to care for us. We put God to shame by acting as if he either will not or cannot care for us.

2. It is not enough merely to think; it is necessary to do what is right. But no one ever does without first thinking. So it is necessary to emphasize the duty of thinking on the things which are right.

3. The church at Philippi was outstanding in its generosity, and in its willingness to care for the needs of Paul. The church had fellowship with him in the gospel from the very first day of its existence. (Phil. 1: 5.) It was a missionary-minded church. Is there any connection between this fact and the fact that there was nothing in the church for Paul to criticize? Churches which are busy doing good do not have time to fuss and fight.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is discontentment, and its effect upon men?

What lesson must we learn before we can have true contentment?

Can one have contentment which is not Christian?

What is your opinion of one who is content to be less than the Lord requires of him?

Golden Text Explained

Why are material possessions not true wealth?

What two men did Jesus use to teach lessons on true wealth?

What is true wealth? Who is rich in God's sight?

What is godliness? What is said of its profitableness?
 Name and discuss many things which godliness will do for one.
 What is contentment? Can one be Godly without being contented?
 Why would Godliness without contentment not be worth much?

How to Find Contentment

What is characteristic of people who find their happiness in material possessions?
 Who can be contented with food and covering?
 For what reasons can we rejoice in the Lord?
 What is the meaning of forbearance? Who can exercise forbearance?
 What did Paul mean when he said, The Lord is at hand?
 How can Christians keep from worrying?
 Why will thanksgiving tend to stop worrying?
 How can we gain contentment through prayer and supplication?
 What is Paul's promise to those who pray for what they want?

Things to Think and Do

What is the source of all that is true?
 Of all that is false?
 May one be more careful about some

things true than about other things equally true?
 What is to be the attitude of Christians toward all things honorable?
 What is the meaning of the word just?
 What does Paul teach about things pure?
 What is meant by things lovely? Of good report?
 What is the value of thinking on such things?
 What does Paul tell us to do? How can we learn these things?
 What blessings is promised to those who do what Paul taught and practiced?

The Secret of Contentment

Tell how the church at Philippi cared for Paul through the years.
 What secret had Paul learned?
 What is the meaning of this word secret?
 How had Paul learned his lesson of contentment?
 Can people who depend on temporal material environment for happiness find contentment?
 What is included in the "all things" which Paul said he could do?
 Where did Paul find strength to do all things?
 Why do not all people have the strength to do all things?
 What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson III—October 15, 1950

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

The Lesson Text

Col. 3: 1-15

1 If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.

2 Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.

3 For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.

5 Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry;

6 For which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience:

7 Wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things;

8 But now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth:

9 Lie not to one another: seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings,

10 And have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scyth'-i-an, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye:

14 And above all these things *put on* love, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature"*
(2 Cor. 5: 17a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Peter 2: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

October 9. M. Gospel Seed Produces New Life (Luke 8: 9-15)
October 10. T. Three Thousand Begin the New-Life (Acts 2: 29-42)
October 11. W. Buried Into Death, Raised Into Life (Rom. 6: 1-11)
October 12. T. Begotten Through the Gospel (1 Cor. 4: 14-21)
October 13. F. Practical Aspects of the New Life (Eph. 4: 17-32)
October 14. S. Simple Teaching for Babies in Christ (Heb. 5: 11-14)
October 15. S. Growing Unto Salvation (1 Pet. 2: 1-5)

TIME.—A.D. 63.

PLACES.—Rome and Colossae.

PERSONS.—Paul and the saints at Colossae.

Introduction

The city of Colossae was situated in the province of Phrygia, in the central portion of Asia Minor, or what is now known as Turkey. It is said that the people of Phrygia claimed to be the most ancient people of the world, and that even Egypt admitted that their claim was true. The people of Phrygia, worshipped Bacchus and Cybele, the latter being called the "mother of the gods." And "in her worship, as well as in that of Bacchus, both sexes practiced all sorts of debaucheries in speech and action, with a frantic rage, which they pretended was occasioned by the inspiration of the deities whom they worshipped. These were the *orgies* of Bacchus and Cybele, so famed in antiquity: the lewd rites of which being perfectly adapted to the corruptions of the human heart, were performed by both sexes without shame or remorse." (Macknight.) With this knowledge as a background, we can understand why Paul should give such emphasis to the putting to death of the old man, and putting on the new man in the image of Christ.

Whether Paul had ever been to Colossae is a disputed question, with good scholars on both sides. After saying that Paul went through the region of Phrygia (Acts 16: 6), and again that he established the churches in the region of Galatia and Phry-

gia (Acts 18: 23), and reminding us that Paul usually went to the principal cities of a country, Albert Barnes cites four arguments made by Dr. Lardner, and joins with him in the conclusion that "it is in the highest degree probable that the church at Colossae was founded by Paul." Col. 1: 24, 25 seems to indicate that Paul had been with them. But Col. 2: 1 is used by others to prove that the Colossians had never seen Paul. Neither passage is conclusive for the purpose for which it is used, so we can never know positively whether Paul was first to preach the gospel there: however the probability is that he did.

When Paul wrote this letter he was in prison at Rome at about the same time the letter to the Ephesians was written. In fact the letters to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and to Philemon were all written at the same time and carried to their destination by the same men. (See Col. 4: 7-9 and Eph. 6: 21.) And since Epaphras, a fellow-prisoner of Paul, is mentioned in both Colossians 4: 12 and Philemon 23, we have added evidence that they were written about the same time. That Paul was a prisoner when the Colossian letter was written is evident from the fact that he asked the brethren to remember his bonds. (Col. 4: 18.)

Golden Text Explained

1. **New Life Conditional.** Not every one is a new creature. Not every good moral person is a new creature. Not every good father, not every good mother is a new creature. Not every rich man, not every poor man

is a new creature. Not every one who feeds the orphan and visits the widow in need is a new creature. Not every devoutly religious person is a new creature. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. So be-

ing a new creature does not depend on being rich or poor, white or black; it depends on being in Christ. If one is not in Christ he is not a new creature regardless of whatever else may be said for him.

This being true, it becomes very important that we learn what it means to be in Christ, and how we may get into Christ. (1) To be *in Christ* is to be related to him so that he is our Head, Saviour, Lord, Mediator, Redeemer, and High Priest. The phrase *in Christ* denotes a relationship. The world is in the evil one. (1 John 5: 19.) The world is related to Satan so that he is their ruler, master, father. (2) How do we get into Christ. Paul says we are baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) And this baptism is in water, for in the baptism which brings us into Christ Paul says we are buried and raised. (Rom. 6: 3, 4.) In the baptism of the Holy Spirit no one was ever buried into the Spirit and then raised out of him. So that person who has never been buried in water and raised therefrom is not in Christ, and does not have him as his Saviour, Lord, Redeemer, Mediator, or High Priest.

2. **Things New in Christ.** By what is the new life in Christ characterized? (1) The person in Christ has a new name. Until one is baptized into Christ he has no right to wear the name of Christ. When people were wearing men's names at Corinth, Paul said he was glad he had baptized but few of them lest they should say they were baptized into the name of Paul. (1 Cor. 1: 13.) From this we conclude that when one is baptized into the name of a person, he has the right to wear the name of the person. Since we have been

baptized into the name of Christ, we wear his name. (2) The person in Christ enjoys a new relationship. Being a new creature, he is a child of God. We are children of God in Christ. (Gal. 3: 26.) Those not in Christ are not children of God. We also have a new relationship with Jesus, for in him we enjoy his blessings as Redeemer, Mediator, and High Priest. (3) The person in Christ has a new law, new standards of right and wrong. He is no longer to "walk according to the course of this world", but to be guided by the light of God's word. (Eph. 2: 1-3; 4: 17-24.) His moral standards are not determined by what the world will allow without criticism, but what is Christlike, what is worthy of their calling. (Eph. 4: 1, 2.) (4) The person in Christ has new objects of affection. He is to love God with his whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Matt. 22: 37.) He is to give up the love of the world and the things of the world (1 John 2: 15, 16). and is to set his affection on things above. He is to cultivate an appreciation for the things which are spiritual instead of that which is material. One who never learns to love the worship of God more than he appreciates a picture show, a prize-fight, or a ball game, will never get to heaven, and if he did, he would be bored to tears if he had to stay there for long. (5) The person in Christ has new interests to engage his attention and to employ his energies. Worldly interests and material affairs may well be the center of one's life out of Christ, but in Christ the church and its activities are to be the center of the new creature's thoughts, words, and deeds. If the church is not the biggest and most valuable thing in his life, he needs to make it so.

Exposition of the Text

I. New Creature Is Heavenly Minded

(Col. 3: 1-4)

If ye were raised together with Christ. Being about to give an exhortation, Paul bases it upon an experience which all Christians have had—their death to sin and resurrection to walk in newness of life. Paul had just referred to this when he said, "Having been buried with

him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God." (Col. 2: 12.) Paul also teaches that this burial is *into* death to sin. (Rom. 6: 3, 4.) So in our baptism we are buried into death to sin, and we are raised into a new life. Christ died to sin and arose to live unto God. (Rom. 6: 10, 11.) In baptism into Christ we establish such union with him that we are said to

die with him, and to be raised together with him.

Seek the things that are above. It is the one who has been raised together with Christ who has the duty of seeking heavenly things. Those who are the servants of sin are free from righteousness. (Rom. 6: 20.) Hence in baptism one turns from earthly things to heavenly things. Having died to sin, his attention is naturally turned heavenward.

Where Christ is. Paul calls attention to the fact that Christ is in heaven to help us seek the things above, and set our affections on heavenly things. The fact that he is seated at the right hand of God suggests his dignity, glory, and majesty.

Set your mind on the things that are above. This means that we are to let our thoughts dwell upon heavenly things instead of the things that are material. The thoughts of the heart determine the character. One whose thoughts are upon heavenly things is a pure, holy character; one whose thoughts are upon earthly things is a worldly character. Hence the need of wholesome reading matter, entertainment, holy conversation, good company. These things determine our thoughts, and thoughts are the material of which character is made.

For ye died, and your life is hid. This death cannot be physical, for they were still alive in the flesh. So he referred to their death to sin. Having died to sin, they should no longer think upon things of a sinful nature. This new life to which they have been raised to live is united with Christ, hence is in God; it is in God in the sense that it is under the control of God, authorized by him, and lived by the strength he supplies. It is *hid* in the sense that it is not manifested as stated in verse 4. The word *hid* is the opposite of manifested.

When Christ who is our life. He is our life in the sense that he is its giver, preserver, and judge. Our life is wrapped up in him, depends on him, continues by his power, mercy, and grace.

Then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. This manifestation means more than simply a resurrection to life; it is even doubtful that Paul had the resurrection in

mind. Here the Christian's life is a hidden life in that there is no show, no spectacular feats to attract the attention of the world; it is an unobserved life. But when Christ shall come the Christian will stand out with him as the greatest, highest, most worthwhile life. It will be the envy of all.

II. Putting Off the Old Life (Col. 3: 5-11)

Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth. The word *members* must be understood of the various members of the physical body, but only as they are the instruments of sin. (Rom. 6: 12, 13.) So far as their relationship was concerned, they had died to sin; but sin had to be subdued in their lives, and the members of their body were no longer to be allowed to serve sin. *Death to sin* might be taken as the statement of a principle, but putting the members to death is the practical application of the principle in every day life.

Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness. These are what Paul referred to as members which are upon the earth, because these are the things done by the members of the body that are sinful. The word *fornication* here is the same in meaning as our use of adultery, while *uncleanness* is a general term which includes all forms of moral abuse. (Rom. 1: 24-27.) *Passion* denotes a morbid, inflamed condition of the sensual appetite. *Evil desire* denotes "a craving for some particular gratification." And *covetousness* denotes a disposition to "have more, grasping greed, selfishness grown to a passion." This is called idolatry because that which one inordinately desires becomes his god: it takes the place in his heart which God should occupy. The man who loves money more than he loves God is an idolater. And for the sake of these things God's wrath is poured out upon men. They are called *sons of disobedience*, or sons characterized by disobedience. From this we learn that sons can be so characterized by disobedience that God's wrath will be poured upon them in the day of judgment.

When ye lived in these things. The expression *these things* refers back

to fornication, etc., named in verse 5. It is taught by some on the subject of divorce and remarriage that one cannot *live in* adultery, but Paul says some of these people *lived in fornication*. One who continues the practice of any sin is said to live in that sin. And one who remarries without scriptural ground *lives in* adultery. (Matt. 19: 9.)

Also put them all away. For definitions of anger, wrath, malice, railing consult a good dictionary. Shameful speaking denotes "lewd, indecent, immodest discourse." These are to be put away because they are a part of the old manner of life, and we have put such things to death. They are inconsistent with the new life we have begun to live.

Ye have put off the old man. The term *old man* refers to the manner of life lived before conversion. The words *put off* are the translation of one Greek word with a double prepositional prefix. One preposition means *out of*, and the other means *away from*. So to *put off* the old man one must *get out of and away from* the old manner of life.

And have put on the new man. This is the new manner of life consistent with Christian principles and the example of Christ. It is something we *put on*; it is not a miracle worked on us, something done for or to us; it is something we do through the help of God.

Is being renewed unto knowledge. The tense of the verb indicates that the renewal is a continuous process. The renewal is unto, not by, knowledge. And the word Paul used for knowledge is not the usual word, but one meaning special, or advanced, knowledge. The thought is that the new man is being developed unto an appreciation of things divine. And this development is after the divine pattern, the image of God in Christ, the creator.

Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, etc. The new life is not the peculiar blessing of any race or nation of people. The civilized, the barbarian, the rich, the poor, the slave, and the free man were all alike on equal footing. Christ is all and in all—he is everything to and for everybody, without distinction of race, color, nationality, or station in life.

III. Putting On the New Life (Col. 3: 12-15)

Put on a heart of compassion, etc. Paul addresses these words to people who are *elect*, holy and beloved. They were elect because God had chosen them on account of their faith and obedience; they were holy in the sense that they were devoted to God, set aside to his service; and they were beloved because of their relation to the Son. (John 14: 21.) The heart of compassion is a disposition to pity those in destitute circumstances. Kindness is the spirit and manner in which we care for the destitute. Lowliness is humility, self abasement. Meekness "is the opposite of rudeness and self-assertion, a delicate consideration for the rights and feelings of others, especially necessary in administering rebuke or discipline." Longsuffering is patient endurance of wrong over long periods.

Forbearing and forgiving. The new life bears with the faults and failings of others without being irritable and unpleasant. We can forgive only when one repents, but we can be longsuffering and forbearing with one if he never repents. Forgiveness means to treat one as if he had never done us wrong. When the father forgave the prodigal, he put him in the place he enjoyed before he went away. (Luke 15.)

Even as the Lord forgave you. The fact that the Lord forgives us obligates us to do so to others. If we are not willing to forgive, we shall not be forgiven. (Matt. 6: 14, 15.) Our forgiveness is to be like the Lord's. "(1) *Freely*—he did not hesitate or deny when we asked him; (2) *entirely*—he pardoned all our offenses; (3) *forever*—he did it so as to remember our sins no more, and to treat us ever onward as if we had not sinned." (Barnes.)

Above all these things put on love. The words *above all* does not imply greater value or importance. As stalks of corn are held together by the binder's twine, so all these virtues of the new life are held together, enlivened, beautified by the cord of love, without which they would be hollow, empty formality. "Love unifies the elements of Christian goodness and gives them in itself their perfectness." "By comparing love to the

girdle wherewith the easterns bound their long robes in a comely manner round their body, the apostle insinuates that love to God and man is the principle which unites all the virtues, and renders them consistent and permanent." (Macknight.)

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. The word *rule* is from a Greek word which means the director and umpire of the Grecian games. The peace of Christ is to "preside over and govern the mind; to preserve everything in its place; and to save it from tumult, disorder, and irregularity. . . . The soul is liable to the agitations of passions and excitement.

... It needs something to preside over it, and keep its various faculties in place and order." (Barnes.)

To which ye were called. They had been called to peace. It was essential that they maintain the peace and unity essential to Christian growth. The new life is characterized by peace, both with God and with our fellowman.

And be ye thankful. We are obligated to God in so many ways and by so many kindnesses we can never thank him enough. But we can cultivate the feeling of gratitude and give thanks on all occasions for his love and mercy.

Topics for Discussion

1. Physical death terminates our relation to things physical and temporal; so death to sin terminates our relation to sin and everything characterized as sinful. When we respond to the temptation to sin, we are in the spiritual realm as dead men walking around again in the physical realm. Having died to sin, we should no longer live therein. (Rom. 6: 2.)

2. Putting to death the desire to sin is, in most people, a long, hard battle. Like killing weeds in the garden, if we allow them to get a start they grow rapidly; but if we keep them cut off so they get no sunlight and

fresh air, they will die and rot. If we occasionally indulge sinful desires, they will never die.

3. We put on Christian characteristics by doing what Christ teaches. We never get them by simply admiring them in others, by wishing for them in our lives; we get them only by doing them the best we can, doing them over and over, doing them better each time than we did the last time, until we develop them to the point where we can do them unconsciously, until they become a part of our nature.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the city of Colossae, its situation, and its people?

What do you know of the religious life of the city when Paul went there?

Why was the teaching of this lesson particularly applicable to them?

Do you think it probable that Paul ever preached in Colossae?

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter, and what other letters did he write at this time?

Who likely carried this letter to the Colossians for Paul?

Golden Text Explained

Name several classes of people who are not new creatures.

Does moral goodness make one a new creature? Is every religious person a new creature?

What phrase expresses the relationship in which the unconverted live?

What phrase expresses the relationship in which Christians live?

What is meant by being in Satan? In Christ?

How does one get into Christ?

Can you prove that it is water baptism by which we come into Christ?

Name and discuss at least five things by which new life in Christ is characterized.

New Creature Is Heavenly Minded

When do people become dead unto sin? Alive unto righteousness?

Show how this conforms to the experience of Christ?

What is the first duty Paul mentions of those who have died to sin?

Whom does Paul mention as being in heaven? For what purpose does he mention him?

How may we set our minds on things above? How important is it that we do so?

What is the death of verse 3? How is our life hid with Christ?

In what way is Christ our life?

When and how shall we be manifested in glory?

Putting Off the Old Life

What are the members on the earth? What is to be done with them?

Define and discuss the things mentioned as sinful members in verse 5.

Can people live in adultery? Give the teaching of Jesus on the point.

Define and discuss the things to be put away in verse 8.

What is necessary to put off the old man?
Show that we have responsibility in putting off the old man, and putting on the new man.

What is meant by the new life being renewed unto knowledge?
After whose image is the new life patterned?

How is the universality of the new life described?

Putting On the New Life

What is the meaning of elect, holy, and beloved?

Name and discuss the characteristics of the life in verse 12.

Define and illustrate forbearance, and forgiveness.

Name and discuss three features of Christ's forgiveness. Is that the way we forgive?

Define love, and illustrate its place in the new life.

What is meant by the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts?

Why are we obligated to be thankful?
For what things?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IV—October 22, 1950

THE CHRISTIAN A WITNESS

The Lesson Text

1 Thess. 1: 1-10

1 Paul, and Sil-va'-nus, and Tim'-o-thy, unto the church of the Thessa-lo'-ni-ans in God the Father and the Lord Je'-sus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention *of you* in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Je'-sus Christ, before our God and Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election,

5 How that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and *in* much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake.

6 And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit;

7 So that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Mac-e-do'-ni-a and in A-cha'-ia.

8 For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Mag-e-do'-ni-a and A-cha'-ia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything.

9 For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God,

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Je'-sus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt. 5: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 107: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

October 16. M.....	Apostles Were Witnesses (Acts 1: 1-11)
October 17. T.....	Stephen a Witness (Acts 6: 8-15)
October 18. W.....	Stephen Stoned for Witnessing (Acts 7: 54-60)
October 19. T.....	Paul a Witness for Jesus (Acts 22: 3-21)
October 20. F.....	Paul Witnessing Before Felix (Acts 24: 10-21)
October 21. S.....	Paul Bears Witness in Rome (Acts 23: 11; 28: 23-28)
October 22. S.....	Antipas a Faithful Witness (Rev. 2: 12-17)

TIME.—A.D. 52.

PLACES.—Thessalonica and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the saints at Thessalonica.

Introduction

The country in which Thessalonica was situated became a Roman province in 148 B.C. The city was well

located, being the principal city of one section of Macedonia, and a good seaport. Its population was com-

posed of Greeks, Homans, and Jews. While Philippi had but few Jews, as indicated by the fact there was no synagogue (Acts 16: 13), Thessalonica had Jews enough to build a synagogue. (Acts 17: 1.) Paul and Silas were the first to preach the gospel in the city, and they established the church. For three sabbath days they preached to the Jews in their synagogue, but unbelieving Jews secured the assistance of certain vile men and made such an uproar in the city that the brethren thought best for Paul and Silas to go. Though they left, they had firmly established the church, composed of some Jews, a multitude of devout Greeks (Greeks who had been proselyted to the Jewish religion), and a number of "the chief women" of the city. (Acts 17: 1-4.) Paul says he preached the gospel to them in "much conflict" (1 Thess. 2: 2), and the church continued to suffer persecution after he had gone. (1 Thess. 3: 1-7; 2 Thess. 1: 4-7.)

While some have thought this epistle was written from Athens, from a statement in 1 Thess. 3: 1, there is

no evidence in this passage to support the idea. Timothy was with Paul when the letter was written (1 Thess. 1: 1); Paul sent Timothy from Athens to visit the Thessalonian church before the letter was written (1 Thess. 3: 1); and Timothy did not rejoin Paul until he was in Corinth. (Acts 18: 5.) Therefore we conclude that the letter was written from Corinth after Timothy rejoined Paul and gave him a report of conditions in Thessalonica. This was in A.D. 52.

The purposes of the epistle seem to be (1) to comfort and encourage them to stand firm under the persecution they were enduring; (2) to commend them for the attitude toward the gospel which they evidenced both in their reception of it and in their practice of it; (3) to assure them of his love for them and his interest in their spiritual progress; (4) to give them instruction concerning the second coming of the Lord; (5) to lead them to exercise proper discipline toward those who walk disorderly; and (6) to give them sundry practical exhortations and instruction in Christian living.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Let Your Light Shine.** (1) It is generally agreed that we have no light of ourselves to give to the world, **but** the illustration of the moon reflecting light from the *sun* to teach us that we reflect the light of Christ is hardly the truth. We do have light. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." But we are light only because of our union with him. He is "the true light even the light which lighteth every man." (John 1:9.) So our light shines when we are in union and fellowship with Jesus. (2) The light is to shine before men; it is to be among them, where it will reach them. Christians cannot withdraw from the world and the affairs of men and save the world; they must come in contact with people. If we never associate with the lost, we will never gain their confidence; we will never show them how to live and meet the trials of life. Only as we go among them and influence them for God will we let our light shine for the glory of God. (3) The light is to be kept uncovered. Jesus said, "Neither do men light a lamp, and

put it under the bushel, but on the stand." Lamps under a bushel go out when they have burned all the oxygen; so people who cover their light with the bushel of worldliness, or sin of any kind, will soon lose their power to give light. Some people cover their light with cares and responsibilities of a material kind. They are members of civic clubs, social clubs, fraternal orders which keep them busy and they never have time to do church work. Their light for the Lord is covered.

2. **How Our Light Shines.** (1) Light is silent in its operation. The Christian is not boastful; he does not make a fuss about what he is doing; he does not blow a horn to call attention to the fact he is helping the poor or visiting the sick. (2) Light is penetrating. So we must penetrate society; we must work our way into the confidence of people; we must win their respect and love. The recluse will never win souls because he never works his way into society to take part in their activities to lead them into what is right. (3) Light works

continuously. It does not of itself grow dim and then bright again, but shines with an even continuous luster as long as the power does not fail. The power which lights the Christian is not going to fail, so there is no need for our light to grow dim. The only thing that can cause our light to grow dim is for something sinful to foul our connection, our union, with Christ. Living a life of worldliness or wickedness will dim our light, or cause it to go out entirely.

3. Need of Shining Lights. (1) That our Father in heaven may be glorified. It is wonderful that the eternal God, Creator of heaven and earth, can be glorified by what we worthless creatures can do. We should esteem it a privilege and an honor to shine for his glory. **(2)** As long as the world is in darkness spiritually the need of shining lights will be

emphasized; and the greater the areas of darkness the more urgent is the need for lights, and powerful lights that will throw their penetrating beams to great distances. Weak, flickering lights, as unstable as fireflies flitting about in the meadow, are of little value to lead men out of the darkness of sin. There is a need for great penetrating searchlights that have power to drive out the darkness of superstition, of selfish greed, of materialism in its several forms, of human error. We need lights that will point the world back to God, to Christ, to his Spirit-breathed word, and to the church he built upon the rock. Think of Noah as a lone light in his generation, of Abraham as a lone light in Canaan; we need such lights in every nation of earth, and soon the whole world would be full of the light of the Lord.

Exposition of the Text

I. Causes of Thanksgiving (1 Thess.

1: 1-5)

Paid, and Sylvanus, and Timothy. Paul does not here style himself as an apostle likely because his apostleship had not yet been called in question as it had when he wrote the letters to Corinth and Galatia. Sylvanus is another word for Silas whom Paul selected for his partner in missionary work when he and Barnabas could not agree on taking Mark with them on the second tour. (Acts 15: 36-41.) From his name we judge that he was a Grecian Jew, and it is known that he was a Roman citizen. (Acts 16: 37.) His name is mentioned before that of Timothy because he was older, and had been with Paul longer than Timothy. Timothy was a resident of Lystra (Acts 16: 1), and became a fellow-laborer with Paul on the second missionary journey. He spent much time at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1: 3), went to Rome to stay with Paul (2 Tim. 4: 21), and suffered imprisonment for a time. (Heb. 13: 23.)

Unto the church of the Thessalonians in God, etc. This means a church composed of people of Thessalonica who were in union with God the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ. To be in God is to be united with him; to be in Christ is to enjoy union and communion with him.

We give thanks to God always. Gratitude is a Christlike disposition. Jesus often gave thanks to the Father. (John 6: 11; 11: 41.) To give thanks *always* is to do so often and with regularity. To give thanks many times one day, and then go for months without it would not be counted as always.

Making mention of you in our prayers. Paul called the name of the church at Thessalonica in his prayers, and no doubt the names of individuals in the church. We are inclined to formality, and the more formal our prayers the colder and more meaningless they become.

Your work of faith. By this is meant, not faith as a work (John 6: 29), but a work produced by faith. James said, "Show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith." Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11: 6), so a work not done in faith, or produced by faith, would not be acceptable to him. But since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom 10: 17), it follows that any work which is not in harmony with God's revealed will is not a work of faith, and is sinful.

Labor of love. By this he means labors produced by love. Love is an impelling motive. People who love the Lord will obey him. (John 14:

15.) People who love the lost will try to save them. People who love one another will help each other. Labors produced by love will be helpful, tender, sympathetic, looking to the best interests of the one served.

Patience of hope. This is patience born of hope. Hope is made of expectation and desire. Strong hope will cause one to be patient a long time without murmuring. We are said to be saved by hope. (Rom. 8: 24.) Hope produces a patience and steadfastness that keeps us faithful to the end.

Knowing, beloved of God, your election. Paul speaks of himself and his associates as knowing that the brethren at Thessalonica were of the elect. This knowledge had been gained by observing the character, faith, and works of the church. From this we learn that the church is composed of the -elect of God, those elected to salvation. But the election is not an arbitrary affair in which the individual has no part. God has purposed to save all who will accept his word and live by it, and those who accept his gracious offer in compliance with his will are elected, chosen, to salvation. To say that the choice, or election, of certain individuals was made before the creation of the world to eternal life, and certain others were elected to damnation, and that no act on our part can change our standing before God, is (1) to make God a respecter of persons, (2) take from man all responsibility, and (3) deny that Jesus died for all men.

Our gospel came not to you in word only. This implies that the gospel came in word. In fact the gospel cannot come without words. (1 Cor. 1: 21; 1 Pet. 1: 23-25.) But it did not come in word only.

In power, Holy Spirit, and assurance. Paul spoke of those things which Christ wrought through him "for obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15: 18, 19.) The reference here is surely to the power and signs which the Lord enabled Paul to work as confirmation of the gospel he preached. And the reference to the Holy Spirit refers to the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and in-

terpretation of tongues through the power of the Spirit which made his preaching effective among them. The assurance of the text may apply to the confidence in which Paul preached as well as that of the people in receiving the gospel.

What manner of men we showed ourselves. The conduct of the preacher has something to do with the reception which the gospel has with people. Paul had so conducted himself that he was not ashamed to recall his manner of life among them and suggest that it had something to do with inducing them to receive the gospel.

II. Witnessing by Word and Deed

(1 Thess. 1: 6-10)

Ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord. Paul does not mean that these people became followers as had some in Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 10-15; 3: 1-5), but they imitated him in bearing trials and in holy living, as he followed Christ. (1 Cor. 11: 1.) No doubt Paul had said much about the sinless life of Jesus, holding it up as a model, urging them to follow him.

Having received the word in much affliction. It was a source of thanksgiving to Paul that the people received the word properly. He said, "And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe." (1 Thess. 2: 13.) The affliction refers to the persecution which came while Paul was in Thessalonica, and which even increased after his departure. (1 Thess. 2: 14.)

With joy of the Holy Spirit. "The gift of the Holy Ghost, bestowed on the Gentile believers, being an evidence of their election to be the people of God, and the seal of their title to a glorious immortality, provided they continued in faith and holiness, must have been a source of unspeakable joy to them, even in the midst of persecution and affliction for the word." (Macknight.)

Ye became an ensample to all that believe. There are at least three things mentioned in which they be-

came examples. (1) The manner in which they received the word of God. (2) The way in which they bore their trials. (3) The joy they derived from their possession and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and their work under his direction. All Greece of that time was divided into two divisions, Macedonia, the northern part including Thessalonica and Philippi; and the southern part including Corinth and Athens. The examples of this church reached far enough to influence Christians in these cities. Thus by their example they witnessed for Christ over a great territory.

From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord. Not only had they set proper examples, but they *sounded forth*, (carrying like the resounding of a trumpet) the gospel. They preached in other cities; they taught men of other cities and sent them back home with the truth. Thessalonica, being a great trading center, had opportunity to reach, not only all Greece, but much of western Asia Minor with the gospel. They used their opportunities well. Thus they were witnesses both by example and by preaching the gospel to others. Churches today will do well to follow their example in these matters.

Your faith to God-ward is gone forth. Their faith had been spoken of in all places. It was such that people observed it, spoke of it, praised it, imitated it. So we conclude it was not a dead faith (James 2: 14-18), but one which manifested itself in good works of such nature that good people wished to imitate it. Their faith was so well known that Paul did not have to speak of it, as the news had gone before him.

What manner of entering in we had among you. All people who spoke of the faith of the church at Thessalonica spoke of it in such terms as to commend Paul and his company for the good, way in which they had preached the gospel and behaved among them. Though influential Jews rejected the gospel and persecuted Paul (Acts 17: 5), and would have been glad to cast reflections on his

character and work, yet the faith of the Christians and the example of suffering they exhibited protected Paul from such false reports. For this Paul was grateful.

Ye turned from idols, to serve a living and true God. The fact that many of the church had turned from idols proves that they were Gentiles, for the Jews were not isolators. This is another way in which these brethren were witnessing for Christ. They had turned from idols, and were so faithful to God, to whom they had turned, that they attracted attention of people over wide areas. God is called the *living* God in contrast to idols which are not alive; and he is called the *true* God in contrast to the false gods, those who were called gods, but in reality were not. (1 Cor. 8: 4-7.) See Acts 17: 22-31 for Paul's contrast of the true God with the heathen gods. These brethren are said to have turned to God to *serve* him. Many turned to him to avoid punishment for sins, to escape the tortures of hell; but these people turned to him to serve him. It would be good for us to follow their example.

And to wait for his Son from heaven. Some think from the fact they were *waiting* for Christ that Paul meant to teach that Jesus might come during their lifetime. But Paul says he had no such ideas. (2 Thess. 2: 1-5.) And he reminded them that he taught them such things while he was with them. So their waiting for the Son from heaven is not to be taken as proof that his coming in judgment was imminent. But the coming of Christ for us, either in death or in judgment, is a powerful force, (1) to restrain us from sin and, (2) to move us to do good.

Who delivereth us from the wrath to come. Jesus will deliver his faithful from the wrath of God which is to be manifested in the day of judgment. The wrath will be manifested by sending the wicked into hell prepared for the devil. (Matt. 25: 41.) It is called everlasting destruction (2 Thess. 1: 6-10).

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul addressed his letter to the "church ... in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," and he said

they had "turned unto God." So we conclude that the church is composed of all who have turned unto God.

The idea of turning unto God, becoming a child of God, and then joining some denomination is not taught in the Bible. The church is the family of God (1 Tim. 3: 15), and all of God's children are in the church.

2. Faith, hope, and love are often connected by Paul. (1) They are said to abide. (1 Cor. 13: 13.) (2) They are a part of the Christian's armor. (1 Thess. 5: 8.) (3) A matter of thanksgiving that people possess them. (Col. 1: 4, 5.) A faith that works by love, based on the

hope of eternal life is the faith that is effectual unto the saving of the soul.

3. Sounding forth the word is one of the primary purposes of the church. The church exists for the good of the members, for their edification, but not solely for that. If a church does not reach out, sound forth the word, to regions beyond, it is not doing the work Jesus intends for it to do, and it will soon die.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the history of Thessalonica? (Consult an encyclopedia.)

Tell of Paul's work in establishing the church.

Of what classes of people was the church

composed?

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter?

Name and discuss some of the purposes for which this letter was written.

Golden Text Explained

Why are Christians the light of the world?

What lesson is suggested by our light shining before men?

By what may the light of the world be covered so as to fail of its purpose?

What lesson does the silence of light suggest?

What lesson is suggested by the penetrating force of light?

What may hinder our light from shining continuously?

What is the primary purpose of letting our light shine?

Why does the world need our light?

Causes of Thanksgiving

Who joined Paul in the writing of this letter? What do you know of each of them?

What is suggested by the expression "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"?

What is gratitude? How does Paul express his gratitude here?

What is suggested as to the type of prayers Paul prayed?

What is meant by work of faith?

What is suggested by labor of love?

What is the meaning of patience of hope?

Who are the elect? How is the election made?

What is the gospel? Can it come to people without words?

How did the gospel come in power? The Holy Spirit? In assurance?

What is said of Paul's manner of life among the Thessalonians?

Witnessing by Word and Deed

Of whom did the Thessalonians become imitators? In what did they imitate Paul?

Under what conditions did they receive the word?

From what source did their joy come?

In what ways did this church become examples? To how many?

What is meant by sounding forth the word? To what extent had this church done that?

What was the nature of their faith? To what extent was it known?

In what way did Paul profit by the faith of the church at Thessalonica?

What fact indicates that there were many Gentiles in this church?

What lesson is suggested by the term, *living God*? The *true God*?

Why had these people turned to God? What other reasons may people have for turning to God?

What is meant by this church waiting for his Son from heaven?

Did Paul give this church any reason to think the second coming of Jesus at hand?

In what way will God's wrath be manifested against sinners? When?

Who delivers us from that wrath, and on what conditions?

Read and discuss as time permits Topics for Discussion.

Lesson V—October 29, 1950

FAITHFUL SAYINGS

The Lesson Text

1 Tim. 1: 15-20; 3: 1-6

15 Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Je-sus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief:

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Je-sus Christ show forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of

them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory for ever and ever. A-men'.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, my child Tim'o-o-thy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare;

19 Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith:

20 Of whom is Hy-me-nae'-us and Al-ex-an'-der; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

1 Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 No brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having *his* children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (But if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him"*(2 Tim. 2: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—2 Cor. 2: 11-17.

Daily Bible Readings

October 23.	M.....	Why Timothy Was Left at Ephesus (1 Tim 1: 3-11)
October 24.	T.	Paul's Teaching With Reference to Women (1 Tim. 2: 8-15)
October 25.	W.....	Another Faithful Saying of Paul (1 Tim. 4: 6-16)
October 26.	T.	Paul's Teaching With Reference to Widows (1 Tim. 5: 1-16)
October 27.	F.....	Some General Exhortations (1 Tim. 5: 17-25)
October 28.	S.....	Warnings Against False Doctrines (1 Tim. 6: 1-10)
October 29.	S.	On Being Faithful to the Good Confession (1 Tim. 6: 11-21)

TIME.—Probably the summer of A.D. 67.

PLACE.—Macedonia—perhaps Nicopolis.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

The time and place of the writing of the first epistle to Timothy cannot be determined positively from our present sources of information. One group of scholars contend that it was written soon after Paul left Ephesus at the close of his ministry when the silversmiths rioted and made it dangerous for him to stay there any longer. Others as learned and as pious contend with equal force that it was written after Paul's release from prison in Rome, and before he was taken prisoner the last time. Albert Barnes is among the first group, while James Macknight is among the second group. When men of their type cannot agree, we may be sure there is not sufficient ground for certainty. If it was written soon after the silversmiths forced Paul to leave, the date would be A.D. 58 or

59. But if after the first imprisonment of Paul, the date would be A.D. 64 or 65. And regardless of which date is correct, all are agreed that it was written from Macedonia; and Macknight thinks the city of Nicopolis, where Paul hoped to spend the winter (Titus 3: 12), is the place. The reader should consult the commentaries mentioned, or a good Bible Dictionary, for the arguments made by each side of this discussion.

Timothy was a resident of Lystra. (Acts 16: 1.) No mention is made of him on Paul's first visit to that city, so it is supposed that he was converted sometime between Paul's visits there. His mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois were devout women. (2 Tim. 1: 5.) His father was a Greek. Timothy was well taught in the scriptures, and made such progress

as to catch the attention of the brethren over a wide area. (Acts 16: 2.) He became a companion of Paul after the Holy Spirit had given a message to that effect, and the elders had ordained him to do the work of an evangelist. (1 Tim. 4: 14.) Paul laid hands on him to enable him to work such miracles as were necessary to confirm the word he preached. (2 Tim. 1: 6.) He served Paul long and faithfully, and was as a son to

him. (1 Tim. 1: 2, 18; 2 Tim. 1: 2; 2: 1; 1 Cor. 4: 17.) Paul commended him for his faithful service. (1 Cor. 16: 10; Rom. 16: 21; 1 Thess. 3: 2; Phil. 2: 19-24.) Paul did not hesitate to say that Timothy could be trusted to care for the churches better than any one else he could send to them, and do it nearer like Paul himself than any other man. Perhaps the last letter Paul ever wrote was addressed to Timothy. (2 Tim. 4: 6.)

Golden Text Explained

1. **The Past.** Our Golden Text is a part of a progressive series of statements designed to encourage people under trials. The tense of the verbs should be noticed. There are three couplets, and the last clause of each is in the future; but the first clause of the first is past, the second is present, and the third is future. Those spoken of as having died with Christ are still alive in the flesh, so we must take this as the death to sin. Paul often refers to our conversion as death to sin and becoming alive to righteousness. (Rom. 6: 3-7.) There we learn that we become dead to sin when we are buried with him by baptism into death; and we become alive to righteousness when we are raised with him from baptism to walk in the newness of life. And having been raised together with him, we are to seek the things that are above and set our minds on heavenly things. (Col. 3: 1.) From this it follows that one who has never been buried with him in baptism has never become dead to sin; and one who has never been raised together with him from baptism has never become alive to righteousness. Sprinkling of water on a person will not meet the demands of the figure. This also teaches the necessity of baptism. When Jesus died, he died unto sin. (Rom. 6: 10.) When we are baptized into his death, we identify ourselves with him in his death so that all the benefits of his death are set down to our account. We are so related to Adam that when he as our physical federal head sinned, we are said to have sinned, and are doomed to die on account of that sin. (Rom. 5: 12ff.) In like manner all who are baptized into Christ are so related to him as their spiritual federal head that when he died they

are counted as having died to sin with him. So those who have been baptized into Christ are dead to sin and alive unto God (Rom. 6: 10, 11); but those who refuse to be baptized never die to sin and never become alive unto God.

2. **The Present.** While this is not within the scope of our text, it is necessary to say a few words about it to preserve the connection. *If we endure.* Having identified ourselves with Christ, we may expect to suffer with him. (2 Tim. 3: 12.) In the past we died to sin; in the present we suffer with Christ. Living for, unto, the Lord has never been pictured as a life of ease. It is pictured as a life of joy, but it is so only to those who have learned how to rejoice in the privilege of suffering and sacrificing for the Lord.

3. **The Future.** The future is uncertain. If we deny him, he will deny us; but if we prove faithful, he will be faithful to us to give us the crown of life. (Rev. 2: 10.) The last clause of our text on first thought seems to point wholly to the future life, but it will fit better into the progress of these couplets if we regard the statement "shall live with him" as future of obligation, and read it as *we should also live with him*. We have the same thought in Rom. 6: 8, and there, too, it is best to make it the future of obligation and say that since we died to sin with him we *should* live in righteousness with him. (see Lard's Commentary on Romans.) Paul is arguing that we should not continue to live in sin, and his reason is that we have died to sin. One does not continue to live, be active, in that realm to which he dies. The physical body does not respond to

the touch or voice of a loved one after it dies; so when we die to sin we are not any longer to respond to temptations to sin. For this reason

all who have died to sin should live unto righteousness. And since he lives unto God, we will live with him.

Exposition of the Text

I. Christ Came to Save Sinners (1

Tim. 1: 15-17)

Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptance. A faithful saying is one that is reliable, one on which we can depend, one in which we can place our trust. But Paul's saying is not only faithful, it is worthy of acceptance by all. If it is worthy to be accepted by all, it must be addressed to all, hence we conclude that the salvation which Jesus came to bring to men is offered alike to all men. If it is worthy of acceptance, there must be obvious reasons why it is worthy. They are (1) that all have sinned, and since the penalty for sin is eternal death, all are doomed to eternal destruction unless saved by divine power. (2) Christ died for all that all might live unto righteousness. (2 Cor. 5: 14, 15; 1 Pet. 2: 24.) (3) If we die with him to sin, live with him in righteousness, we shall reign with him in glory. (Rev. 22: 5.) (4) This salvation is offered upon such easy terms that all, even the poorest and weakest, can be heir to all its blessings here and hereafter. The phrase *worthy of all acceptance* may mean acceptance without reservation, a full hearty reception; or it may mean acceptance by all men. If the latter is meant, we may with all consistency offer this salvation to rich and poor, learned and unlearned, high and low alike. There are none so good that they do not need it, and there are none so wicked they cannot be saved.

Christ Jesus came to save sinners. Jesus came on a mission; he was a missionary. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom. (Matt. 20: 28.) He was the Great Physician who came to heal the sick. (Luke 5: 31, 32; 19: 10.) Since all have sinned (Rom. 3: 23), he came to save all men. (1 John 2: 2.) This coming to save sinners may well be contrasted with the purpose of his second coming, at which time it is said that he will come to take vengeance upon

sinners (2 Thess. 1: 7-10), sending them to eternal punishment.

Of whom I am chief. Paul spoke of himself as the chief of sinners, not because he had been a vile man morally, but because he had rejected Jesus and persecuted his church. Men should realize that they do not have to be immoral to be great sinners. Paul was ever willing to confess his sin; he did not try to justify himself and save face. No true Christian will be so lacking in humility as to try to deny his sin and unworthiness in God's sight.

For this cause I obtained mercy. The statement of the cause follows. It is not to be supposed that this is the sole cause of Paul's conversion, but God had in mind that by his salvation all men might know that no sin is too great to be forgiven, and that no sinner is beyond the reach of his love and mercy.

That in me as chief. . . . The thought is that since Paul was the chief of sinners, and Jesus could and would save him, it is proof that he can and will save any who will turn to him. The Lord made Paul an example, or pattern, for all who thereafter would believe on him to life everlasting. A pattern is something to be followed, as well as proof that a thing can be done because it has been done before. From this we learn (1) that Paul *believed* on the Lord to life eternal; (2) his conversion is an example for all others to follow; and (3) if we follow this example it will lead to eternal life. From the records in Acts we find that Paul believed in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; second, he repented of his sins; and third, he was baptized to wash away his sins. (Acts 9: 1-18; 22: 16.) This is *believing* on the Lord to eternal life. Anything short of this is not enough.

Unto the King eternal. This verse is given in praise to God who made salvation possible. He is called King because he rules over all. (1 Cor. 15: 28.) The word eternal refers to his reign, and means that he reigns

throughout all ages, world without end.

Immortal. The word means to be exempt from death. Elsewhere Paul says God only hath immortality. (1 Tim. 6: 16.) The Father hath life in himself. (John 5: 26.) He is the source of life. Death cannot reach him or affect him in any way or to any degree. Man is mortal in that he is doomed to death, to separation of body and soul. Death does not mean that we will cease to exist. That in man which is the offspring of God is immortal, not of itself, but because of its connection with God. God is immortal of himself, in his own nature.

Invisible. The Father is said to be invisible (John 1: 18; 6: 46; Col. 1: 15), and the Son is said to be God manifest to men. (1 Tim. 3: 16.) God is a Spirit (John 4: 24), and physical eyes are not capable of beholding spirit beings.

The only God. The prophets declare there is but one God. (Deut. 4: 35; 1 Sam. 2: 2; Isa. 43: 10, 11; 44: 6-8; 46: 9.) This, however, is not to be construed to mean that Jesus was not God, for Paul says he was in the form of God and on equality with God (Phil. 2: 6), and John says he is the true God. (1 John 5: 20.)

II. A Charge Given Timothy (1 Tim. 1: 18-20)

This charge I commit. The charge referred to here is that mentioned in verse 3. He was left in Ephesus that he might charge certain men not to teach any doctrine different from that which he preached while he was there. He was making Timothy responsible for seeing to it that the charge was obeyed, that nothing contrary to gospel truth was taught in the church. Only in this way could the purity of the church be protected and perpetuated.

According to the prophecies which led the way to thee. Paul was entrusting to Timothy a serious trust **according to prophecies.** It is suggested here that prophets in the church spoke as the Spirit moved them concerning Timothy and the work he would be enabled to do. And Paul was giving him such work as the prophets had said he would be capable of doing.

Mayest war the good warfare. By the recollection of these prophecies he was to be stirred to greater efforts to fight a good warfare. To do this he must (1) be brave; (2) he must be steadfast, not easily discouraged, not ready to give up; (3) he must not entangle himself with the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2: 4); (4) he must be willing to suffer hardships; (5) he must be in submission to authority, obedient to his Captain.

Holding faith and a good conscience. In fighting the good warfare Timothy would be expected to hold to the faith of the gospel. Perhaps holding to that faith, the fidelity, is the primary thought. The good conscience is to be had in doing what he knew to be right, what he knew to be his duty. No one can fail in his duty and have a good conscience, unless he has seared his conscience until it no longer registers any objections.

Made shipwreck concerning the faith. Some have thrust from them a good conscience, and in so doing they have made shipwreck of the faith. It is dangerous to continue to do things which disturb the conscience, for after so long the conscience will fail to do its work.

Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus preached that the resurrection was already past. (2 Tim. 2: 17, 18.) He seems not to have learned his lesson from being delivered to Satan, for in the second epistle he is mentioned as still a false teacher. Alexander was a coppersmith who did Paul great injury (2 Tim. 4: 14), and may have been the man who tried to speak in Paul's defense years before. (Acts 19: 33.)

Whom I delivered to Satan. It is difficult to determine what this means. Paul delivered the incestuous man of Corinth to Satan. (1 Cor. 5: 4, 5.) This he did through the consent, and by the action of, the church. How or when he delivered these men to Satan is not known. The man at Corinth was delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the soul might be saved, and we have evidence that he was brought to repentance. (2 Cor. 7: 11, 12.) But it seems that neither of these men was brought to repentance, so they could not be saved in the day

of the Lord. Delivering one to Satan was probably allowing Satan the privilege of afflicting the body as in the case of Job. (Job 2: 6.)

III. The Office of a Bishop (1 Tim.

3: 1-6)

If a man seeketh the office of a bishop. Peter says elders are to exercise the oversight willingly. (1 Pet. 5: 2.) It is a work to be desired, yet there is a humility which must be present with the desire, and where that humility is lacking the man is unworthy of the trust and it is dangerous to give him the power.

He desireth a good work. It is not so much an office as it is a work; it is not a position, but a job. Too many elders do not work; they are a board of governors to say, Yes, or No, to things the congregations wish to do. They should plan work for all, and lead all to work.

The bishop therefore must be without reproach. Notice the use of the words *bishop* here, and *elder* and *bishop* in Titus 1. Some have the idea that all old men are elders, but only such as have these qualifications are bishops. But Paul appointed elders in the churches (Acts 14: 23), and he left Titus in Crete to appoint elders in every city. Did he appoint men to be old men? The word elders refer to age, but also is used of those who held the office. They must be without reproach, that is, they must not be guilty of anything which cannot be charged to human frailty. Since none are perfect, men will allow some imperfections without reproach or blame; but if men go beyond that which can be charged to human frailty, it will bring reproach, and such men cannot serve as elders.

The husband of one wife. This statement has been given three meanings. (1) That a bishop must not be a polygamist. (2) That a bishop is not allowed to marry a second time. (3) That a bishop must be a married man. The first surely cannot be its meaning, for if so, it must be assumed that others might be allowed to live in polygamy. Why say a bishop cannot be a polygamist if no man in the church is allowed many wives? The second explanation is not to be accepted without casting a reflection on all second marriages, which Paul expressly teaches is acceptable. (1 Cor. 7.) It must mean that a bishop must be a married man, for such will give him experience in rearing and ruling children necessary to qualify him for the office. (Verse 4.) It is so worded as to prevent polygamy, for if he is the husband of *one* wife he will not be a polygamist. But if he is not the husband of one wife he fails to be qualified as much as he does if he has more than one, so far as the wording here is concerned.

Apt to teach. The bishop must be specially prepared to teach, have the ability to teach. It is his duty to feed the flock. (Acts 20: 28.) Guide from infancy to maturity. (Eph. 4: 11-16.)

Not a novice. A novice is a new convert, one who has not long been a Christian. The reason given is "lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil." By this is meant the same condemnation into which the devil fell. So here we learn that the devil fell on account of pride. And new converts too soon elevated to the office of bishop might become proud and use the office for personal ends.

Topics for Discussion

1. The blood of Christ was able to save the chief of sinners, so no sinner need despair; it took the blood of Christ to save the best man we know, Cornelius (Acts 10), so the best moral man in the land must not reject the salvation offered through his blood.

2. Following the pattern set in Paul's conversion will save you; nearly following the pattern may nearly save you, but being nearly

saved is no salvation at all: changing the pattern to suit our parents' religion is not acceptable.

3. Men who serve as bishops must be leaders, not followers of others. None can be perfect, but they must have these qualifications to the extent that they may serve as examples to those under their rule. Men might be bishops over one group, but not qualified at all to be bishops over another group.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the time and place of the writing of first Timothy?

Where was Timothy's home? Who were his mother and grandmother?

When did he become a companion of Paul in missionary work?

What did prophecy have to do with his becoming a gospel preacher?

What did Paul do for him to qualify him for his work?

What did Paul think of him and his work?

Golden Text Explained

What is the purpose of the statements among which our text is found?

What is the meaning of the word *die* in our text?

When and how do we become dead to sin?

When do we become alive to righteousness? What is meant by that expression?

What is taught in these passages as to the action in baptism?

What blessings are to be gained by becoming dead to sin and alive to righteousness?

What are those dead to sin expected to endure? What is their reward?

What will happen to all who deny Christ?

What is meant by the expression "shall live with him"?

In what respects is death to sin like physical death?

Christ Came to Save Sinners

What is a faithful saying?

What is the faithful saying? Give four reasons why it should be accepted by all.

In what way was Jesus a missionary?

Contrast the purpose of the first and second comings of Jesus.

Did Paul boast that he was chief of sinners?

Why did Paul obtain mercy? How was this mercy shown him?

What is suggested in the expression that Paul was made an example or pattern for others?

Who is said to be King eternal? What is meant by immortal?

What is taught about the invisibility of God?

Who is said to be the only God? Does this deny the divinity of Jesus Christ?

A Charge Given Timothy

What is the charge referred to?

Why did Paul select Timothy to be his fellow-laborer?

Name and discuss five things necessary to war a good warfare.

What is meant by holding the faith and a good conscience?

Who made shipwreck of the faith? How was it done?

What is meant by delivering one to Satan? Give instances.

The Office of a Bishop

In what attitude should a man seek the office of a bishop?

Contrast *position* and *job* as relates to the office of a bishop.

When is one without reproach? Does this mean perfection?

What is meant by being husband to one wife?

What is a novice? Why are they not to be bishops?

What is the condemnation of the devil?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VI—November 5, 1950

PAUL'S CHARGES TO TIMOTHY

The Lesson Text

1 Tim. 6: 17-19; 2 Tim. 3: 14, 15; 4: 1-8

17 Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is *life* indeed.

14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast

been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Je'-sus.

1 I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Je'-sus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

2 Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 For the time will come when

they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts;

4 And will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.

5 But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.

6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Preach the word*” (2 Tim. 4: 2a.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Mark 16: 14-19.

Daily Bible Readings

October 30. M..... Timothy's Religious Background (2 Tim. 1: 3-14)

October 31. T..... Suffering Hardship As a Good Soldier (2 Tim 2: 1-13)

November 1. W..... The Lord Knoweth His Own (2 Tim. 2: 14-26)

November 2. T..... Grievous Times In the Last Days (2 Tim. 3: 1-17)

November 3. F..... Paul Looks to Timothy for Help and

Comfort (2 Tim. 4: 9-22)

November 4. S. Paul's Estimate of Timothy (Phil. 2: 19-30)

November 5. S..... Timothy's Standing Among Brethren (Acts 16: 1-5)

TIME.—Probably summer of A.D. 67 for 1 Timothy; and spring of 68 for 2 Timothy.

PLACES.—Probably Nicopolis for 1 Timothy; and Home for 2 Timothy.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

As with the first epistle, so with the second epistle to Timothy, there is some dispute as to when it was written. Some think it was written while Paul was in prison the first time, the imprisonment mentioned by Luke. (Acts 28.) But by far the majority of the greatest Bible scholars are of the opinion that Paul was imprisoned a second time, and that it was during this time that he wrote the second letter to Timothy. Even some who think he wrote first Timothy during his first imprisonment argue that the second letter was written during his second imprisonment. The chief reasons for the later date are suggested.

(1) When Paul was first imprisoned he expected to be released (Phil. 2:

24); but when he wrote second Timothy he expected to be executed.

(2 Tim. 4: 6). (2) Paul speaks of deliverance from the mouth of the lion when he made his first defense, and this deliverance was that through him the Gentiles might hear the gospel. (2 Tim. 4: 16,- 17.) This suggests that he was set free from his first imprisonment that he might go on into Spain (Rom. 15: 28), as he

desired. (3) It is said that Erastus remained at Corinth. (2 Tim. 4. 20.) The meaning of this suggests that two were traveling together, and that one decided to remain in a place while the other went on. It is known that Erastus was not with Paul on his first journey to Rome, and it is known that Paul did not go through Corinth on his first journey to Rome. And why would Paul have mentioned such a matter if it had occurred five years before, which would be the case if it happened on his first journey to Rome. (4) Trophimus was in the company of Paul on this last journey to Rome, but it is known that he was not with him on the first. (2 Tim. 4: 20.) Trophimus was left at Miletus sick, but it is known that Paul did not go by Miletus on his first journey, so it must have been a second journey. (5) During the imprisonment mentioned in Acts by Luke Paul was allowed to live in his own hired house, and was permitted to have as many visitors as wished to come. But at the time he wrote second Timothy he was in close confinement, and only Luke was with

him. (2 Tim. 4: 11.) During the imprisonment of Acts 28 he had friends who supplied him with all he needed, but at this time he asks Timothy to bring him the cloak, books and parchments he left at Troas with Carpus. (2 Tim. 4: 13.) It had been five years since he left Troas to go to Jerusalem and from there to Rome for his first imprisonment. Would he not need them during five years of imprison-

ment, and then decided to have them brought to him? Would he tell of a friend who got sick five years ago and was unable to continue the journey with him? From these matters we must conclude that Paul was delivered from his first imprisonment, that he went on to preach to the Gentiles, was arrested a second time and taken to Home where he had no liberty, was condemned, and died.

Golden Text Explained

1. Preaching In God's Plan. The

Lord has always depended on preaching to inform people of their duty. Noah preached to the people of his day. The prophets were preachers who went about teaching people their duty, encouraging them, reproving them for their sins, and telling them of the doom which awaited them if they did not repent. Jonah was sent to Nineveh with a message. John the Baptist was sent to preach repentance in view of the approach of the kingdom of God. Jesus, soon after his baptism, went throughout all the cities preaching and teaching concerning the kingdom of God. (Matt. 9: 35.) When he left the apostles he told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. (Mark. 16: 15.) And Paul said it was preached in all creation under heaven. (Col. 1: 23.)

The Lord has always demanded that people obey his word as preached by his servants. No one has ever been allowed to reject and mistreat the preacher of God's word without being called to account for it. The Jews mocked the messengers of God, despised his words as preached by them, and scoffed at his prophets "until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chron. 36: 15, 16.) When Jesus sent out his apostles he told them that the man who rejected them rejected him, and whoever rejected him rejected the Father. (Luke 10: 16.) No one can reject God and fare well in judgment.

The word is the seed of the kingdom. Preaching the word is sowing the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 8: 11.) It is as necessary to preach the word as it is to sow seed for a crop. It is the duty of the church to preach the word since it is the

support of the truth. (1 Tim. 3: 15.) The church is to hold forth the **word** of life. (Phil. 2: 15, 16.) It is to sound forth the word that others **may** turn to God. (1 Thess. 1: 8.)

2. **Preach The Word.** The emphasis is now on the *word*, that which is to be preached. We have the ears of people for so little time that we should not waste time discussing politics, book reviews, or philosophies of men. (Col. 2: 8.) We should preach the word because (1) Faith comes by hearing the word. (Rom. 10: 17; Acts 15: 7.) Without faith one cannot be saved, but since **faith** comes by hearing the word, it follows that one cannot **be saved without** hearing the word which brings faith. (2) The word is able to **save** the soul. (Jas. 1: 21.) Paul said the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. (Rom. 1: 16.) The Lord directed Cornelius to send for a gospel preacher who would tell him words whereby he and his family would be saved. (Acts 11: 14.) And (3) we are begotten by the word, which is the incorruptible seed, and **by** the gospel is preached unto us. (1 Pet. 1: 23-25.) This suggests the idea that the word is the seed of the kingdom, and that when planted in the heart it will beget new life. When this life is translated by the new birth the result is a child of the kingdom. (4) Paul said the gospel he preached at Corinth was that by which they were saved, and that wherein they stood—the power by which they were able to stand. (1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) (5) The word of God is able to build **us** up and give us an inheritance among **all** them who are sanctified. (Acts 20: 32.) It is that by **which** we **grow** unto salvation. (1 Pet. 2: 1-4.)

Exposition of the Text

I. Charge Concerning Riches (1 Tim. 6: 17-19)

Charge them that are rich in this present world. Earthly riches are good for this world only; they do not reach into the next world, unless sent on ahead. (Matt. 19: 21.) If we lay up our treasures in heaven, we will be rich in the next world.

That they be not highminded. This is the sin so nearly universal among the rich. The rich man of Luke 16 was highminded because he paid no attention to the poor at his gate. They feel no need of people in less favorable circumstances, so live as if the poor were not in existence.

Nor have hopes set on uncertainty of riches. Riches are uncertain as a basis for hopes because (1) no one knows that he can retain his riches. They may be stolen; money in the bank can lose its value. (2) Money cannot buy health, or happiness. When death comes to a home, the rich are as helpless as the beggar. The rich depend usually upon earthly things for happiness, and though their money can buy a type of happiness, it is not the lasting soul-building happiness which communion with God gives. The poor can have as much of that as the rich can have. (3) God will judge us, not on the basis of how much wealth we have, but according to our works. The poor can use what little he has as faithfully as the rich can use his great wealth, so can receive as great reward as the richest man on earth. And in addition he is free from the temptations and responsibilities of the rich.

God give us richly all things to enjoy. Paul reminds the rich that all their wealth is a gift from God. For this reason they should put their trust in God, the Giver, and not in their wealth, the gift. This should help the rich to be not highminded, seeing that God has given them all they have. Again, if God has given it to them, they are all the more obligated to use it for his glory. They do not really possess the wealth; they simply hold it and are expected to use it for the glory of God.

That they do good. This and the statement following, *be rich in good works*, mean the same thing. They

are to be as rich in good works on the behalf of others as they are rich in the wealth of this present world. It should be remembered that they are *charged* to do this. It is not something which they may do if they feel so inclined; they are commanded to do it, and their salvation depends upon it. Preachers should remember that they are obligated to teach the rich to use their wealth for the salvation of their souls. We are not to be so afraid of losing our jobs that we will not teach the rich to use their wealth. Nor are we to be afraid we will drive the rich from the church if we teach them their duty along this line. A teacher should use his ability to teach God's word; a singer should use his ability to sing God's praise; a rich man should use his money for God's glory.

Ready to distribute, willing to communicate. These statements mean about the same thing. The community system of feeding the poor which the church in Jerusalem used was not intended to last always, for if that had been the law, Paul would have told Timothy to charge the rich to sell all they had and bring the money to the church treasury. Even in Jerusalem no one was forced to do so; it was a voluntary affair. (Acts 5: 4.)

That they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed. From this we learn that the use of one's wealth will determine his eternal destiny. Jesus taught the same when he said, "Make to yourselves friends by the means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (Luke 16: 9.) The rich young ruler was told that he might have eternal life if he would do one thing more, and that was to sell what he had and give to the poor. (Matt. 19: 16-22.) Rich people cannot buy their way into heaven, but they certainly cannot get there if they do not use their money for the good of others and the glory of God.

II. Charge Concerning the Scriptures

(2 Tim. 3: 14, 15)

Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned. Paul had spoken of grievous times to come when men

would be ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth (verse 7); they would wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Timothy was not to be so unstable. His foundation was such that he could stand firm. He was to abide in that which he had learned. It was something which afforded a solid foundation on which to stand.

Knowing of whom thou hast learned them. Albert Barnes says this refers to Timothy's mother and Paul. He then gives a fine lesson on the duty of children heeding the instruction of parents. But the word *whom* most probably is singular, so could not refer to both Paul and his parents. The word is singular in the text used in Emphatic Diaglott; no other text is at hand. But if Timothy was to abide in the things he had been taught solely because his parents had taught him, it would follow that all children are to abide in the things their parents have taught them. What would the children of infidel parents do? Timothy had been taught by Paul, an inspired teacher, and he could well afford to abide in what he had been taught. And we too should abide in the things we have been taught by apostles. But things we have been taught by men must be compared with apostolic teaching. (Acts 17: 11.)

From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings. The word *babe* means a very young child. The Jews began to teach their children the scriptures as soon as they were old enough to learn anything. It was counted a disgrace for parents to allow their children to grow up without a knowledge of the scriptures. The knowledge of verse 14 is something different from that contained in the sacred writings, as may be seen from the grammatical construction. He was to abide in the things he had learned, *knowing* two things; first, from whom he had learned the things he was to abide in, *and*, second, that from a babe he had known the sacred writings. Surely no one would contend that Timothy was to abide in the teaching of the Old Testament as his rule of faith and practice. But his knowledge of the Old Testament would serve him well in many ways.

Make thee wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. The Old Testament reveals much of the character of God; it tells of a coming Messiah, of his person and work. One should have a knowledge of this to appreciate Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecies. But this statement is not to be taken to mean that the plan of salvation is revealed in the sacred writings which Timothy had been taught from infancy. One could never have faith in Jesus if he never read anything but the Old Testament. (John 20: 30, 31.) One would never know to confess Jesus, or to be baptized for the remission of sins; one would never know to worship God in any other way than offering lambs, first-fruits, etc., if he read only the Old Testament. In the gospel we learn of Jesus, how to obey his gospel, and how to worship him.

III. A Charge in View of Judgment (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)

I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus. This is the strongest charge one can give another, for the persons before whom one is charged determine the solemnity of the charge. This was not solely for Timothy's benefit, but for all preachers of the gospel in all ages to come. To the extent we respect God and his Son, we will be true to the duty which follows this charge.

Who shall judge the living and the dead. Jesus Christ is to be the judge of all. God will judge the world by him. (Acts 17: 31.) The word he revealed will be the standard of judgment. (John 12: 48; Rev. 20: 12.)

By his appearing and his kingdom. The charge is (1) in the sight of God and Christ, (2) by, or in view of, the coming of Jesus to judge the world, and his reign over all. In view of the fact that Jesus is king, and that he will come again to judge all, we are to do that which is our duty. It was the duty of Timothy to preach the gospel, so Paul charged him to do so in view of these great impelling motives.

Preach the word, in season, out of season, etc. This means that we are to preach at all times, whether convenient or not, whether we have a good opportunity or not. Men who are satisfied to confine their preach-

ing to public gatherings do not have the salvation of lost souls at heart. Men who preach only when they are paid to do so do not love the lost. And gospel preaching includes reproof, rebuke, exhortations, which are to be given in longsuffering patience and kindness. Men can reprove and rebuke kindly and firmly. One does not have to be harsh, unkind, uncouth to reprove and rebuke. These things can be done in love.

When they will not endure the sound doctrine. Paul warned that the time would come when people would not love the truth. Some people do not love the truth because it condemns them. Others do not love the truth because it condemns their parents, or friends. They would repress the truth, keep it from being preached at all to shield their loved ones. They fail to realize that only the truth has power to make men free. (John 8: 32.) The people of old wanted their prophets to say "smooth things," things which would not disturb their ease; they were not interested in truth, but in things they loved to hear. (Isa. 30: 10, 11.)

Be sober in all things. Gospel preaching is a sober business, and those who engage in it should be known for sobriety. Preachers who are known for their ability to tell "tall tales" hardly live up to this charge. Preachers are to be willing to suffer hardship, persecution, and make genuine sacrifices in order to preach the gospel. This does not mean that churches must keep the preacher poor by insufficient support so he can suffer.

Topics for Discussion

1. The use of wealth, not the possession of it, determines character. If we use it to the satisfaction of the flesh, we will perish; if we use it for the glory of God we shall live.

2. Those who have been taught the scriptures from childhood have a much better chance to go to heaven than those who have not been so taught. Parents have no right to

I am already being offered. This expression shows that Paul did not expect to live long. In fact it suggests that all preparations had been made for the offering, and he was waiting for the death blow.

The time of my departure is come. The word departure means *unmooring*. As a ship is tied while in process of building, but untied when it is to be launched, so Paul's unmooring was at hand and he would launch out into the sea of eternity for which this life was but a preparation. Death is the beginning, not the end, of the good things of our existence.

I have fought a good fight. The Christian life is a warfare against sin, error, and all that is opposed to God. We must be fighters if we be Christians.

I have finished the course. The Christian life is a race to be run faithfully to the end of the course. (Heb. 12: 1, 2.) It is to be run in harmony with the rules. (1 Cor. 9: 24-27.)

I have kept the faith. Paul had not corrupted the faith to please his Jewish friends; he had not denied the faith when faced with death; he had been faithful and loyal to his Master whom he loved and to whom he had promised to be true.

Is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. The crown far outweighs the cross. (Horn. 7: 18.) It is for all who are faithful. (Rev. 2: 10.) The Lord is a righteous judge who will not be a respecter of persons, so all who have loved his appearing enough to make ready for him may expect to have such a crown of righteousness.

bring children into the world and then neglect their eternal welfare.

3. The responsibility of gospel preachers is great. There is temptation to compromise; there is temptation to neglect to study; there is the possibility of teaching error; and there is the possibility of driving people away by the manner in which we preach.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Give and discuss five reasons why Paul's second letter to Timothy was not written during the imprisonment mentioned by

Luke in Acts. Do you know of any other evidence?

Golden Text Explained

What place did preaching have in God's plan in the Old Testament times?
 What place did preaching have in the work of John? Jesus?
 How important was preaching in the program of the apostles?
 What is the responsibility of people who hear the preaching?
 Give and discuss three expressions which emphasize the duty of the church to preach.
 What are we not to preach?
 Give and discuss five reasons for preaching the word of God.

Charge Concerning Riches

By what is the value of riches limited?
 Can they be taken with us to the next world?
 What is the common sin among the rich against which Paul warns?
 Give three reasons why men are not to set their hopes on riches.
 Why are the rich to be careful to put their trust in God?
 In what are men to be rich? What is the force of this charge to do so?
 What is the preacher's duty towards the rich with respect to these matters?
 What special duty do the rich have toward the poor? How was this matter cared for in the first church in Jerusalem?
 How do we know such plan is not intended for us today?
 How did Jesus teach that the use of money determines where we spend eternity?

Charge Concerning the Scriptures

In what did Paul tell Timothy to abide?
 Of whom had Timothy learned the things in which he was to abide?

How long had Timothy known the scripture? What scripture did he know at the time?

What is suggested as to the duty of parents to teach the scripture to their children?

In what way does the Old Testament make us wise unto salvation?

What necessary things are we not taught in the Old Testament?

A Charge in View of Judgment

What is the meaning of a charge? Why in the sight of God and Christ?

Who is to judge the world? By what standard will he judge?

What is the meaning of the expression "his appearing and his kingdom"?

What is meant by preaching the word in season? Out of season?

Of what is the gospel preaching composed? Can one rebuke in kindness and love?

Why do people not love the truth? What request did people of old make of the prophets?

Discuss the duty of preachers to be sober. Can it be overdone?

What did Paul mean by saying he was already being offered?

What is the meaning of the word departure? Of what is death the beginning?

Discuss the Christian life as a warfare. What is the enemy? What about training for warfare?

Discuss the Christian life as a race. What is the race course? What hinders good running?

How important is it to run according to the rules? What about self-denial to keep in shape to run? Who gets a crown for running?

What is meant by keeping the faith?

What is the reward Paul said was waiting for him?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VII—November 12, 1950

SOBER LIVING

The Lesson Text

Titus 2: 1-15

1 But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine:

2 That aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience:

3 That aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good;

4 That they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 *To be* sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed:

6 The younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded:

7 In all things showing thyself an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity,

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us.

9 *Exhort* servants to be in subjection to their own masters, *and* to be well-pleasing *to them* in all things; not gainsaying;

10 Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

11 For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

12 Instructing us. to the intent that,

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world;

13 Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Je'-sus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.

15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5: 8a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 2: 14-18.

Daily Bible Readings

November 6. M. . Let Us Cast Off the Works of Darkness (Rom. 13: 8-14)
 November 7. T..... Love Does Not Behave Unseemly (1 Cor. 13: 1-13)
 November 8. W..... Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16-26)
 November 9. T..... Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind (Eph. 4: 17-32)
 November 10. F..... Putting on the New Man (Col. 3: 1-17)
 November 11. S..... Study to Be Quiet (1 Thess. 4: 1-12)
 November 12. S..... The Tongue to Be Bridled (James 3: 1-12)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 67.

PLACES.—Titus was in Crete, and Paul was probably in Colossae.

PERSONS.—Paul and Titus.

Introduction

We know nothing of the early life of Titus, where he was born, when he was converted, or when he became a fellow-laborer of Paul. It is rather certain that he was not a proselyte to the Jewish religion, for he was never circumcised. Paul refused to allow the Jews to compel him to be circumcised at the Jerusalem conference. It seems that Paul took him along as a test case. (Gal. 2: 1-5.) Titus seems to have gone from Jerusalem back to Antioch with Paul, and from there to Corinth; or he may have been called later to join Paul in Corinth, as no mention is made of his being with Paul on the journey. At any rate he worked with Paul at Corinth. (2 Cor. 8: 6, 23; 12: 18.) Titus carried the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, noted their reaction, and returned to report to Paul, and then carried the second letter and got ready the offering of the Corinthian church by the time Paul arrived. (2 Cor. 2: 13; 7: 5-15; 8: 6; 9: 1-5.)

From that time we hear nothing more of Titus until he is left in Crete to ordain elders and set the churches in order. (Titus 1: 5.) This must have been after Paul was set free at Rome. Paul and Titus are supposed to have labored there some time, and

Paul, having to go on, left Titus for about the same reason he left Timothy in Ephesus when he was driven out by the silversmiths. It is thought that Paul went on, perhaps by Jerusalem, to Antioch, and then west into Asia Minor where he visited again the churches where he had labored so much. He spent some time in Colossae, where he asked Philemon to prepare him a lodging. (Verse 22.) It is probable that he wrote Titus from there as he requested him to meet him in Nicopolis, saying he had decided to winter there. If the letter had been written from Nicopolis, as some think, Paul would have said he decided to winter *here* instead of *there*. Titus joined Paul in Nicopolis, told him of the situation in Crete, and in all probability they and Trophimus went to Crete. Then for some reason Paul went back to Rome, leaving Trophimus in Melitus sick (2 Tim. 4: 19), but taking Titus with him. (2 Tim. 4: 10.)

The purposes of the letter to Titus seems to have been (1) to give instructions for setting the church in order; (2) to warn Titus to be careful on account of the character of the Cretans (1: 12); and (3) to warn him against Judaizing influences among the Jewish converts.

Golden Text Explained

1. Exhortation to Watchful Sobriety. The Greek word translated *sober* is used very few times in the New Testament. (1 Thess. 5: 6, 8; 1 Pet. 1: 13; 5: 8; 2 Tim. 4: 5; 1 Pet. 4: 7.) In the last two references it is translated *watch* in the King James version. In most of these places it is used in connection with watchfulness. The word means to abstain from drink, and then in a more general sense to be careful, thoughtful, circumspect with regard to our actions. The word *watchful* means to be on guard as one is when he senses danger. It suggests that careful watchfulness of a hunter who, himself, may be stalked by wild animals. Those who obey this exhortation will not go to places where they would not wish to be found by the Lord on his return to judge the world. They will not keep company in which they would not wish to be found by the Lord. They will not indulge in questionable pleasures which would cause embarrassment if they had to go from them to the bar of judgment. If we are as sober and watchful as we should be, we will not engage in business, or use business principles, which we would not wish to be doing when the Lord comes for us. Not knowing the time of his coming, or of our going to be with him, we must be sober and watchful at all times. Too much is at stake for us to be found off our guard.

2. Reasons for the Exhortation. (1) We have an adversary. Satan opposes us in everything good. Some doubt the existence of a personal adversary, saying it is the principle of evil existing in the mind. But Jesus, in whose mind was no evil, was tempted by Satan. And from Job we learn that Satan came before Jehovah with the sons of God. (Job 1: 6.) We are told he has been tempting the human race with remarkable success for a long time, that he is subtle, that he is deceitful, and

capable of tempting us beyond our ability to resist if allowed. (2) We have a fierce, terrible adversary. Satan is in some respects like a roaring lion. The lion does not roar for the pleasure he gets from the exercise; it is an expression of ravenous hunger, of fierce anger. So Satan is ravenously desirous of destroying us. (3) We have a restless, untiring adversary. He *walketh about*. Satan does not wait for us to come his way; he is out looking for us. This suggests that Satan is not omnipresent, as is God, and that he goes about from place to place. But he is not alone in his work; he has angels, and no doubt they are organized, as he is called the prince of the powers of the air. (Matt. 25: 41; Eph. 2: 2; 6: 12.) And he uses wicked men as his ministers. (2 Cor. 11: 15.) No doubt he often uses innocent people, and may even use God's people occasionally when they are not as watchful as they should be. (4) We have an adversary *intent* upon destroying us. The hunter goes into the woods intent upon killing a deer. The soldier goes out intent upon killing the enemy. All the arts of stalking and taking the enemy by surprise are used. So Satan is going about using every art and device which he has learned in all his thousands of years of experience tempting and destroying the human family. (5) We have a devouring adversary. The word devour means to drink, or gulp down. It is translated *swallow* in Matt. 23: 24; 2 Cor. 5: 4; 1 Cor. 15: 54; Heb. 11: 29. It denotes complete destruction. And that is what our adversary is intent upon doing for us. Hence we are told to be sober, watch, pray that we may be delivered from the evil one. (Matt. 6: 13.) We are promised that God will guard us from the evil one. (2 Thess. 3: 3.) If he did not guard us in that he does not allow stronger trials than we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10: 13), we would all be devoured by this adversary.

Exposition of the Text

I. Sobriety Enjoined on All (Titus 2: 1-10)

Things which befit the sound doctrine. The word *sound* means whole-

some, healthful. Titus is to teach such things as will cause people to live wholesome lives. We have used the word doctrine to mean what is

taught on baptism, the kingdom, the resurrection, and such subjects, until people speak of "doctrinal sermons" and "practical sermons." But there was no such distinctions with Paul. All the teaching of Christ was doctrine. Titus is exhorted to teach sound doctrines instead of the unwholesome doctrines of the Judaizers.

Aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded. The aged men here are not **elders, bishops, for their** qualifications are given in chapter one. All old men are to be temperate, or self-controlled, moderating their conduct in harmony with their age and influence. The word grave implies seriousness, freedom from levity; yet not severe, stern, morose. Sober-minded implies that one has his faculties under control, his passions well regulated; to be sedate, staid.

Sound in faith, love, patience. Aged men are to have a healthy faith, free from human traditions. This implies a correct, as well as full, knowledge of the gospel. They are to have a healthy love. They should have learned to pass over offenses and injuries, and have a Christlike love for all. And they should have developed a patience which would enable them to bear with the weak and erring, and to lend them comfort and encouragement.

Aged women. These are to be **reverent**. The Greek word here means "becoming a holy person." They are not to be **slanderers**, or devils, for the Greek word used is the regular word for devil. It means false accuser, calumniator. They **are** not to be **enslaved to much wine**. This does not endorse the use of a little wine, nor does it forbid its use under all circumstances. But it does forbid enslavement to wine, and the best way to keep from becoming a slave, or leading others by our example to become slaves to it, is to refrain from its use. They are to be **teachers of that which is good**. All have opportunity to teach in their associations with others, hence all should be prepared to teach. (Heb. 5: 11-14; 1 Pet. 3: 15.)

Train the younger women. This is the duty of aged women. The word train includes both instruction and nurture, or guidance in application.

Soldiers are instructed, then put through drills under the supervision of officers before they are said to be trained. They are to be trained to love their husbands and children. This implies more than simply telling them it is their duty to do so. Aged women should know things from experience which will be helpful to young women, and some of these it would not be proper for Titus to teach the young women. And these are to be **sober-minded**, for when women are old enough to be mothers, they are old enough to leave off the frivolities of youth, and give sober attention to the duties of motherhood. They are to be **chaste**. This word means pure, modest, innocent. They are to be **workers at home**. The Lord made it the duty of women to become mothers and to guide the children. (1 Tim. 5: 14.) This does not mean there can be no exceptions, for so far as we know Lydia was not told to quit her business of selling purple. (Acts 16: 14.) But the home is woman's sphere, and she will best serve humanity and glorify God if she works there. They are to be kind, and keep themselves in **subjection to their husbands**. God made man the head of the home, not a tyrant or boss, but the head, the governor or leader. Husbands are to love their wives, and wives are to respect and obey their husbands. (Eph. 5: 22, 23, 33.) If husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church, the wives will find it easy to obey. And all of this is to be done that the word of God be not blasphemed. If we do not follow this instruction, the enemies of the Lord will have occasion to speak evil of the gospel.

Younger men to be sober-minded. Both men and women are taught the necessity of sobriety. Christianity is to wield a sobering influence in the world. When church people go as wild over rodeos, and Christian colleges go as wild over athletics, as the world about them, it is time to doubt if they are giving as much attention to gospel teaching on sober-mindedness as they should.

Showing thyself an ensample of good works. Paul gives Titus personal counsel along with the young men, telling him to be an example

before them. Hence we conclude that young men are to follow his steps, and be what he told Titus to be. They are to show uncorruptness in doctrine. This is opposite to the idea that it makes no difference what doctrine one believes and teaches. Paul told Titus to use such sound speech in his doctrine that those of the contrary part would be ashamed.

Servants to be in subjection. There were those who taught that since there is neither bond nor free in Christ (Col. 3: 11), all servants were free from their masters, and they were encouraged to leave their masters. While Christianity will elevate the world above slavery, it was not the purpose of the Lord to destroy such social customs immediately or by force. Slaves were to please their masters so long as they did not have to violate the teaching of Christ. They were not to be guilty of *gain-saying*. This word means arguing back. The slave was to do what the master said without argument. *Not purloining*, or pilfering, taking that which belonged to the master. Employees may well ponder this teaching, for they have opportunity to take a little at a time, and during the year it would amount to a sum sufficient to warrant arrest for theft. *Showing good fidelity*, or being faithful to care for the best interests of the master or employer. And in these ways even a slave can *adorn the gospel of God*. To adorn means to make attractive, or appealing. So by holy living we may make the gospel appealing to others, so that they will wish to obey it because of the beauty of our lives.

II. Sobriety Taught by Christ (Titus 2: 11-15)

The grace of God hath appeared. The word grace means favor, but in what was this favor manifested? Some say it refers to Christ, who came teaching us; while others say it refers to the gospel of Christ, which seems most probable. Since Christ revealed the gospel, there is no essential difference.

Bringing salvation to all men. The salvation through the gospel of Christ is offered to all men regardless of race or color, whether rich or poor, wise or ignorant. But bringing salvation

to all men does not mean that all men will be saved, for men must accept that which is brought before it benefits them. Acceptance of this salvation means giving up the world and the love of worldly things, and the price is too high for many to pay.

Instructing us. The grace of God instructs. God does not convert people by direct impact of Holy Spirit upon human spirit; he does not purify us in that way. He sent his apostles into all the world teaching, preaching, by word of mouth and by pen, and this system of teaching is to be perpetuated. (2 Tim. 2: 2.) We are begotten by the word (1 Pet. 1: 23); we grow by the word (1 Pet. 2: 2); we are saved by the word. (Acts 20: 32; James 1: 18, 21.) When teaching stops, the church begins to die.

Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. The word ungodliness means impiety. It includes denying the existence of God, the character of God as revealed in the Bible; it includes neglect of worship and failure to develop a love for communion with God; it includes profaning the name of God by cursing and swearing, using his name in vain. To deny ourselves this means to refuse to practice such, to refrain from living in such way. The term *worldly lusts* includes (1) those evil passions to which humanity is prone and which cannot be indulged to any extent without sin; (2) those pleasures which in themselves are not wicked, but on account of our attitude towards them, and our use of them, may become sinful to us. When one becomes slave to pleasures, regardless of how innocent they may be, such things must be classed as worldly lusts, and of them we must deny ourselves. When the enjoyment of any material pleasure enslaves us to the extent that we neglect worship, Bible study, prayer, and meditation, or any other gospel duty, it wars against the soul (1 Pet. 2: 11), and from it we are commanded as pilgrims here below to abstain.

Live soberly, righteously, and godly. To live soberly we are to exercise such restraint as to keep our lives in harmony with gospel requirements. To live righteously is to treat our fellowman right. In doing this we

will not slander him: we will keep our promises and contracts faithfully; we will do to him as we would have him do to us. To live godly is to fulfill our obligations to God. It is the opposite of ungodliness in the verse above.

Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour. (1) Only those who live as directed in verse

12 are in position to look for the coming of Christ. (2) The blessed hope is that of eternal life entertained by all who wait for his coming.

(3) Appearing of the glory of the great God is taken by some to refer to Christ as the manifestation of God in judgment. It is not unusual to refer to Christ as God (Rom 9: 5;

1 John 5: 20), but here it is said that the *glory of the great God* will appear, and we are told that Jesus will come in the glory of his Father. (Matt. 16: 27.) And (4) it is also said that Jesus will appear, and that this is something for us to be looking for with joy. Only those in Christ who are living as here directed can entertain this as a blessed hope.

Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us. This refers to the death of Jesus to redeem us from sin. Those who think the death of Jesus nothing more than that of a martyr for his cause have to reject the teaching of this verse. If the death of Jesus had no power to atone for sins, this verse is meaningless.

Purify unto himself a people for his own possession. The death of Jesus has power to purify people, and it does so (1) by obtaining forgiveness, and (2) by restraining us from sin. The people thus redeemed and purified are his people. They are the church. (Eph. 5: 25-27.) And they, in appreciation for his goodness, are to be zealous of good works.

Speak . . . with all authority. Titus was to teach plainly, positively, knowing he had received these things from an inspired apostle. There was to be no compromise, no partiality. And people who disobeyed were to be re-proved regardless of their station in life, or their relation to him. It is still the duty of preachers to teach and reprove with authority.

Topics for Discussion

1. The Christian religion is eminently practical. It reaches into the smallest details of everyday life. Continued study is necessary to know how best to order one's conduct.

2. Preachers are to teach such practical living, and reprove all who will not so live. They are not meddling in the affairs of others when they point out this path of duty and insist on Christians walking therein. It means the salvation of both preacher and people, but for him to neglect

his duty may mean the destruction of both.

3. Since Jesus gave himself for the church, and he gave himself to redeem a people for his own possession, it follows that the church is his people. If one is not a member of that church, he does not belong to Christ by right of redemption. Since we are redeemed by the blood, it follows that if a person is not in the church, the redeemed possession, he has never been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is known of the nationality and religion of Titus?

In what way was Titus connected with the Jerusalem conference?

In what place did Titus labor with Paul?

What letters did he carry for Paul?

Where did Paul leave Titus? For what purpose?

What city is the most probable place of writing of this letter? Why?

What is the last mention of Titus by Paul?

Name some purposes of this letter to Titus.

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning and use of the word *sober* in the New Testament?

What does the word *watchful* mean?

Why should we be sober and watchful at all times, and in all places?

Do you believe in the personality of Satan? Why?

In what respect is Satan like a roaring lion?

What is suggested by his walking about?

Whom does Satan have as helpers in his work?

In what ways does Satan have the advantage of human beings?

What is meant by Satan devouring us? How are we protected from him?

Sobriety Enjoined on All

What is sound doctrine? Is there a difference between the doctrinal and practical?

Are the aged men bishops? Why?

Define temperate, grave, and sober-minded.

What is meant by sound in faith? In love? In patience?

What is the meaning of reverent as applied to aged women?

What is the meaning of the word slanderer?

What is meant by their being enslaved to much wine? Is it right for people to be enslaved to tobacco, or *enslaved* to anything not essential to the health of the body?

What duty do women have as teachers? What are they to teach?

What is implied in training young women?

Discuss sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, and subjection to husbands.

What duties are bound upon young men in this lesson, and on Titus as an example to them?

Discuss subjection of servants, and the command not to answer back, nor pilfer.

What is meant by adorning the gospel? How is it done?

Sobriety Taught by Christ

What is the grace of God in this lesson? What has it brought? To whom?

What place has teaching in the plan of salvation?

What is meant by ungodliness?

Discuss two types of worldly lusts, and show how they war against the soul.

What is the meaning of soberly, righteously and godly?

Who can look for the coming of Christ with pleasure?

What is the blessed hope? Who possesses it?

What is meant by the appearing of the glory of the great God? When will it be?

State and discuss two purposes of the death of Christ.

How does the death of Jesus purify us? To whom does the word us refer?

What duty did Paul lay upon Titus in speaking of these matters? Does this duty rest on preachers of the gospel today?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VIII—November 19, 1950**PAUL INTERCEDES FOR ONESIMUS****The Lesson Text**

Phile. 7-19

7 For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

8 Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting,

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Je'-sus:

10 I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, O-nes'-i-mus,

11 Who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart:

13 Whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might

minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

14 But without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will.

15 For perhaps he was therefore parted *from thee* for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever;

16 No longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself.

18 But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth *thee* ought, put that to mine account;

19 I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* (Gal. 6: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phile. 20-25.

Daily Bible Readings

November 13. M.

Jesus Comforts a Sorrowing Widow (Luke 7: 11-17)

November 14. T.

Lesson on Being a Good Neighbor (Luke 10: 25-37)

November 15. W.....	One Who Failed to Be a Neighbor (Luke 16: 19-31)
November 16.	T. Have Due Consideration for Others (Horn. 14: 1-12)
November 17. F.....	Supplying the Needs of Others (2 Cor. 8: 9-15)
November 18. S.....	Doing Good Unto All Men (Gal. 6: 1-10)
November 19. S.....	Fulfilling the Royal Law (James 2: 1-13)

TIME.—A.D. 62 or 63.

PLACES.—Rome and Colossae.

PERSONS.—Paul, Philemon and Onesimus.

Introduction

Paul's letter to Philemon was written from Rome during his first imprisonment, and when Paul expected to be released soon, for he asked Philemon to prepare him a lodging. (Phile. 22.) The letter contains several names common to the epistle to the church at Colossae which leads us to think the two letters were written about the same time, and perhaps carried by the same messenger. We conclude that Philemon lived at Colossae because Epaphras was a member of the church at Colossae (Col. 4: 12), and he was in prison with Paul and sent greetings to Philemon. (Phile. 23.) And again Paul told the Colossians that Onesimus was one of them, and that he was a faithful and beloved brother. (Col. 4: 9.) And since Onesimus was formerly with Philemon, we naturally conclude that Philemon lived at Colossae.

The occasion of the writing of this epistle was the conversion and return of Onesimus to his former master. Since Paul was in prison, we naturally suppose that Onesimus went to him. This implies that he had known Paul before, and we can hardly suppose

that he had had an opportunity to see Paul anywhere else than at Colossae. Paul must have been in the home of Philemon and attracted the attention of this servant. The servant was not then a Christian, but in need of a friend in Rome, he found Paul. In their association, Paul taught the servant the truth and led him to Christ. (Phile. 10.)

It is probable that the servant felt that he should return to Philemon, and Paul would not keep him, though he very much needed him, without the consent of the master. There seemed to be some fear in Onesimus that Philemon would not receive him, or that he would be punished if he returned. The purpose of the letter is to ask Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother, and to show him such courtesy as Philemon would show Paul if he were to go to him. And knowing that Philemon would give the matter more serious consideration in the near prospect of a visit from Paul, he is asked to prepare a lodging for Paul and assured that he expects soon to be privileged to visit him. (Phile. 22.)

Golden Text Explained

1. Bear One Another's Burdens.

(1) In time of temptation. Paul had just told those who are spiritual to restore in the spirit of gentleness any who had been overtaken in a sin. Too often people avoid others who have sinned. And instead of talking to the sinner about his sin, we are prone to talk to others about the sinner and his sin. In this way we make his burden heavier. But if we go to the one who has sinned, encourage him to repent and ask God to forgive, we make his burden lighter and help him along the way. Since all are subject to temptation, we should realize that we may need just such sympathy, and that we have no

right to expect it unless we are willing to show it to others. (2) In time of need. People have burdens in the matter of food, clothing, and shelter. The poor in Jerusalem were in need and the brethren who had property sold it and gave the money to the apostles to use as they saw best. (Acts 4: 32-35.) Some years later the church at Antioch heard of the distress which would come upon the saints in Judaea, so they gathered money and sent it to them by Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 11: 27-30.) Again, the churches of Macedonia, under the leadership of Paul, took a collection for the poor in Judaea. (2 Cor. 8, 9.) In this way the

churches which were able helped to carry the load of those who were not able; they were bearing the burdens of others. Jesus said we have the poor with us always, so there is always this opportunity to bear burdens of others. (3) In time of sorrow. Sorrow comes to every home. Sometimes it comes in the form of swift and sudden death, and those left to weep need someone to help them carry the load. They need sympathy; they need someone to sit by, maybe in silence, but near enough for comfort and encouragement. Sometimes sorrow comes in prolonged illness, deformity in a child, or in other ways we are helpless to prevent or change. Such burdens are heavy, and because of their unending nature they seem unbearable. In such conditions people long for help, and none should be so well qualified to help as those who have begun to grow into the likeness of Christ who went about rendering just such service. See him at the home of Mary and Martha (John 11), and with the widow at Nain. (Luke 7: 11.)

2. Fulfil the law of Christ. (1)

When a young lawyer came to Jesus to ask what he should do to gain eternal life, Jesus told him to love God and his neighbor. But the man justified himself by asking, Who is my neighbor? Then Jesus told of

the good Samaritan, and forced the lawyer to answer his own question. Then he said, "Go, and do thou likewise." Here Jesus commanded help to those in need regardless of race or color. Jesus helped others, bore their burdens; Jesus died for all of every race, so he lived by the law he gave to us. (2) Paul likens the church to the physical body (1 Cor. 12: 12ff), and concludes that as the members of our body sympathize with one another, and cooperate with each other, so members of the body of Christ should do likewise. "And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." This is the law of Christ on the subject. "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep." (Rom. 12: 15.) Many who wish to rejoice with them that rejoice do not care to weep with them that weep, but we do not fulfill the law unless we do both. (3) "Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well." (James 2: 8.) This is called the royal law, or kindly law, because it is given by the King, and was followed by him while he was on earth. Surely none of us can expect to be like our King and meet his approval unless we live by the law which he gave and by which he lived.

Exposition of the Text

The material of this Lesson Text does not lend itself very well to the form we have been following. It is composed of a series of arguments which Paul made to Philemon in the behalf of Onesimus, showing why Onesimus should be received as a brother in Christ. So the arguments are numbered and listed in their order as suggested by Matthew Henry, whose commentary it would be well for each student to read in this connection.

Argument 1. (Verse 7.) In this verse Paul tells Philemon that he had enjoyed his love and the hospitality which had been shown him in former days. Not only had Paul enjoyed this, but the hearts of the saints had been refreshed by the goodness of Philemon. The word *refreshed* suggests the effect of water in the body

of a weary desert traveler. So in the desert of life there are persons whose love refreshes our hearts like water refreshes the body. This is a good approach to one who is about to be requested to do an unusually difficult task.

Argument 2. (Verse 8.) Paul says he had all boldness to enjoin Philemon to do what he wished. In other words, Paul had authority to command Philemon. Notice the phrase *in Christ*. Paul had no political, or legal, authority to command anybody to do anything. But Paul did have authority in Christ to command that which is right for people in Christ to do. Whatever he might bind on earth would be bound in heaven, and what he loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 16: 19; John 20: 23.) Here again we see the

courteous approach of Paul to his friend and brother. It would be well for us to cultivate the ability to make a wise approach to people that we may influence them for good. It is never right to flatter or compromise the truth in our approach, but it is good to be wise and tactful within the limits of righteousness.

Argument 3. (Verse 9a.) Though Paul had the authority to command Philemon to do that which was right in Christ, he preferred to waive his right and to plead with him on the basis of their mutual love. Love is stronger than law. Napoleon said he and other great men had built kingdoms by force of arms and law, and they had perished; but Jesus Christ had built a kingdom on love that has outlived them all. People who are forced to obey, will obey as long as the force is applied, but will quit when the force is withdrawn; but people who love will keep on obeying without pressure. Jesus said, If you love me you will keep my commandments. So Paul felt he could get a nobler response from Philemon on account of their love for each other than he could get by commanding him with the authority of an apostle.

Argument 4. (Verse 9b.) This argument contains two parts. First, Paul speaks of himself as an aged man. Most scholars think Paul was at this time not much more than sixty years old. But the hard work he had done, the trials he had suffered, and the hardships he had endured had no doubt broken him, or aged him beyond his years. (2 Cor. 11.) There is an appeal in age. Young men find it hard to refuse an aged man's request. So Paul appealed to Philemon, who was undoubtedly younger than Paul, to grant his request on account of his age. Second, Paul was a prisoner at this time, (verse 1), and he was a prisoner for Christ whom Philemon loved and served. A man bent with age, suffering not for wrongdoing, but on account of preaching the gospel, with the right to command but prefers to plead, to beg, asking a favor, not for himself, but for another—who could refuse such a request to do that which is befitting?

Argument 5. (Verse 10.) Three things to notice here. First, Paul

asks for something for his son, his child. Of course Philemon would immediately think of someone whom Paul had converted, in the class of Timothy or Titus. Paul would not use such language of one in whom he did not have complete confidence that he was in every way worthy. Second, this child had been begotten or converted in prison. This indicated something good in the child, for Paul, being in prison, could not go out to contact him. This person had come to Paul in prison. Further, being in prison, Paul's opportunities were somewhat limited, so when he converted a person he loved him all the more. Third, the name of Onesimus was reserved until the last of the sentence. Paul wished Philemon to know that the request concerned his child, and one whom he had begotten in prison and so very dear unto him, before the name was called. The name Onesimus would recall injuries and unpleasant scenes and incidents in the mind of Philemon. But in the place of these things, or over against them, Paul has placed the spiritual condition of Onesimus for the consideration of Philemon.

Argument 6. (Verse 11.) Though there was a time when Onesimus was unprofitable to Philemon, he is no longer such, but is profitable both to Paul and Philemon. The argument is that he should receive him back because of the profit to be derived. Conversion makes a profitable person out of an unprofitable one. This is not to be taken as an endorsement of slavery, or that Paul was sending Onesimus back to his master because slavery was right and the slave had no right to leave. Onesimus felt he had wronged Philemon and wished to return to make right these wrongs. In what way he had wronged him we do not know. He may have stolen something. His leaving would cast a reflection on the character of Philemon. There are many ways in which he could have wronged him.

Argument 7. (Verse 12.) The expression, *I have sent*, has caused some to think Paul demanded that Onesimus return. But Paul had no way of forcing the slave to go back against his will. Paul often spoke of sending men to various places for different reasons. (Phil. 2: 25; Col. 4: 7, 8.)

But the appeal reaches one of the high points when Paul asks that Philemon receive Onesimus on account of what he means to Paul, his *very heart*. By this he means the object of his affections. Paul could not have made the appeal any stronger; he could not have used a stronger expression of endearment than this one. Whatever Philemon does to Onesimus will indicate his attitude towards Paul himself. In effect Paul is saying, Philemon, if you love me, don't mistreat my child.

Argument 8. (Verses 13, 14.) Paul says he would have been glad to keep Onesimus that he might minister in the behalf of Philemon. This suggests that Philemon had an obligation to Paul, and since he was converted by Paul he had the obligation to help. (Gal. 6: 6.) Since Philemon lacked opportunity to render such service personally, Paul, as we would say, was tempted to keep Onesimus that he might so minister. But that would be getting such service without the consent of Philemon and Paul would not do that. From this we learn that all service rendered must be a willing service. Furthermore if Paul had retained Onesimus, Philemon might have thought Paul had something to do with the slave's disappearance in the first place. Or at least he could have felt that Paul took advantage of him. From this we should learn so to order our affairs that no one will have occasion, much less just cause, to accuse us of anything wrong.

Argument 9. (Verse 15.) When Joseph was sold into Egypt by his brothers, it was a sin, yet God overruled it for the saving of his people. (Gen. 45: 7, 8.) So when Onesimus left Philemon he did wrong, but God overruled it for the good of both. Paul says, "he was parted." This is said in the light of God's purposes in the matter. God had a hand in it. And could we know as God knows, we might see many such instances in the lives of all of us where God's hand has directed the affairs of our lives for our good. In this instance the salvation of a soul was brought about through the providence of God. Certainly it was not without the word of God and the obedience of the man; but God's providence brought the man and the preacher of the word to-

gether. Having been converted, Onesimus was returned to Philemon in a higher relationship, and one that would last forever.

Argument 10. (Verse 16.) By saying that Onesimus was no longer a servant it is implied that he had formerly been a servant. Albert Barnes argues that this does not prove that he was a slave as the word is sometimes used to mean a hired hand, a voluntary servant. But it is most probable that Onesimus was a slave. He is to be no longer simply a servant, but more than that, a beloved brother. This does not necessarily mean that Philemon must not use Onesimus in his former service, whatever it was, but it certainly does imply that he is to be treated as a beloved brother. And if Philemon applied the Golden Rule, he set him free provided Onesimus wished to be free from him. He was beloved to Philemon *both in the flesh and in the Lord*. The phrase *in the flesh* denotes whatever civil relationship existed between them; and *in the Lord* denotes the relationship they had as Christian brethren.

Argument 11. (Verse 17.) Here again Paul puts the matter up to Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would receive the apostle himself. Paul speaks of himself and Philemon as being partners, but he does not say in what. But they were not partners, or companions, in anything except the gospel. So we conclude that he means they were partners in the labors, the hopes, and enjoyments of the gospel. Certainly one would receive his partner in the gospel. Paul says if you count me your partner, receive him; but if you do not receive him, I will know you do not count me as your partner. If love can lay down an ultimatum, this is it.

Argument 12. (Verses 18, 19.) Paul offers to make satisfaction for any wrong Onesimus had done. It is implied here that Onesimus owed Philemon something. Whether he ran off with money, or depriving Philemon of his service for a time put him in debt to him is not certain. But the wrong was done before Onesimus became a Christian, and his becoming a Christian did not free him of the debt. Wrongs must be repented of, and

repentance requires restitution, or making right the wrongs done as far as is humanly possible. But the slave had no way of repaying, so Paul said, Charge it to my account. Likely Paul felt sure Philemon would not exact the amount of him, though if he did so, Paul was legally bound to pay the debt. Then Paul reminded Philemon how much he owed Paul for what he had done for him. Paul had brought the gospel to Philemon,

had led him to obey the gospel, and whatever hopes of eternal life he had he owed it all to Paul. What the slave owed Philemon was utterly insignificant as compared to what Philemon owed Paul for his conversion. Hence Philemon surely could not afford to exact the money of Paul when he could never begin to repay Paul for his services. Preachers perform a service for people the value of which can never be reckoned in dollars.

Topics for Discussion

1. The principles and practice of slavery and Christianity cannot dwell in the same heart, yet God did not root up slavery abruptly. The principles and practices of war and Christianity cannot dwell in the same heart. They are incompatible. The love and practice of Christianity will lift individuals and nations above war.

2. Paul expected Philemon to respect him on account of his age, his bonds, his love, and his service. It is sad to see men get old and have nothing

but age for which they may be respected. Paul served others, so was entitled to be respected by others.

3. If Onesimus owed Philemon for wrongs done before his conversion, would not a thief upon conversion be required to return stolen goods or money after conversion? Would not a polygamist be required to give up his unlawful wives after conversion? Would not a person with an unlawful companion (Matt. 19: 9; Rom. 7: 3) be required to give up what is unlawful after conversion?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What reason do we have for thinking Paul expected to be released from prison?

What evidence do we have that Philemon lived at Colossae?

What evidence have we that Paul had been in Colossae, and that Onesimus knew him?

What is the purpose of the letter to Philemon?

What is the probable reason for Paul saying he planned to visit Philemon soon?

Golden Text Explained

How can we bear one's burden in time of temptation?

Give instances of people bearing one another's burdens in time of need.

What assurances do we have of such opportunities always?

In what ways does sorrow give us opportunity to bear the burden of others?

How did Jesus teach us to fulfill the law by helping others?

How did Paul teach us the law of bearing the burdens of others?

What did James call this law?

Exposition of the Text

How does Paul commend Philemon?

What is the meaning of refreshed?

How much authority did Paul have over Philemon? In what relationship?

Why did Paul have this authority? Do we have such authority today?

What is suggested as to the right approach to people to get them to do right?

Why did Paul not use his authority to get Philemon to do as he wished?

Why is love stronger than law?

If love is stronger than law, why the necessity of law? Think.

About how old was Paul at the time he wrote Philemon?

What tended to make him older than his years?

Why did Paul mention his age in this appeal to Philemon?

Why did Paul mention the fact that he was in prison?

Why did Paul make mention of the fact that Onesimus was his child before he called his name?

What is suggested by the fact Onesimus was converted by Paul in prison?

In what way had Onesimus been unprofitable to Philemon?

Why had he now become profitable to Philemon? And to Paul?

In what ways is it possible that Onesimus had wronged Philemon?

Is there any indication that Paul demanded Onesimus to return against his will?

How does Paul express his affection for Onesimus?

Why did Paul not keep Onesimus to minister to him?

What does Paul suggest with reference to the providence of God in this matter?

Contrast the relationship of Onesimus and Philemon before and after Onesimus' conversion.

What evidence do we have that Onesimus was the slave of Philemon?

What is the probability that Onesimus was set free?
In what were Paul and Philemon partners?
What is the force of asking him to receive Onesimus on the ground of being partners?

What does this lesson teach with reference to restitution for wrongs?
Why did Philemon owe Paul anything?
In what way are people indebted to faithful gospel preachers today?
What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IX—November 26, 1950

GOD'S MESSAGE BY HIS SON

The Lesson Text

Heb. 1: 18; 2: 1-4

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners,

2 Hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his* Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son?

6 And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, And his ministers a flame of fire:

8 But of the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them*.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard;

4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*This is my beloved Son. in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him*” (Matt. 17: 5b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 17: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

November 20. M.....God's Prophet Like Unto Moses (Deut. 18: 15-19)
November 21. T.....God Promised a New Covenant (Jer. 31: 31-34)
November 22. W.....Everlasting Kingdom Promised (Dan. 2: 31-45)
November 23. T.....Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus (Luke 4: 16-30)
November 24. F.....Jesus Brought Message from God (John 12: 44-50)
November 25. S. Holy Spirit Gives Message to Apostles (John 16: 1-15)
November 26. S.....Apostles Wrote Message for Us (Eph. 3: 1-13)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63.

PLACES.—Written in Italy, probably Rome, to Hebrews of Palestine.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew converts.

Introduction

The authorship of the book of Hebrews has been disputed more than that of any other book in the New Testament. There is nothing in the text of the book which identifies the writer, yet it is obvious that the writer expected those addressed to know who wrote it. (Heb. 13: 18, 19, 22, 23.) The Eastern world has always accepted it as Paul's work, but the Western world was slow to accept it as his. However from the fourth century it has generally admitted Paul as the writer. Clement of Alexandria says that the famous Christian school at that place taught that the epistle was written by Paul. This was in the second century. It was included in the Peshito, or old Syriac version, in the early part of the second century under Paul's name. Justin Martyr, born in Samaria, quotes from it in A.D. 140 as being the work of Paul. The great historian Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, says Paul wrote it. Origin, who spent the last twenty years of his life in Palestine, says the sentiments are those of Paul, though written by another. There were some in these early times who thought Paul wrote it in Hebrew, and that Luke, probably, translated it into Greek; but Albert Barnes gives reasons which seem conclusive that this is not true.

That the letter was written to Hebrew converts to Christianity is obvious. Besides, the testimony of

practically all the early fathers who have written on the subject, there is internal evidence that is conclusive. There is no mention of Gentile laws or customs; the Hebrew worship and history fill the book; the book abounds with references to dress, duties, and ceremonies of the high priest, priests, and the structure of the tabernacle with which the readers are supposed to be familiar. Furthermore, it is very probable that the book was addressed to the Hebrews of Palestine, and not those of the dispersion. Those Jews who lived in Palestine were called Hebrews, while those of other countries were called Grecian Jews. (Acts 6: 1.)

As to the time of the writing of this epistle, we may be sure it was before the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, for no mention is made of it. It was most likely written before the disorders of civil war in Palestine in A.D. 66 as no mention is made of the hardships such strife would bring upon Christians. Yet the writer speaks of former days as being some time in the past (Heb. 10: 32-34), and says they had been Christians long enough to be teachers of others. (Heb. 5: 11-14.) From these we conclude that it was written late in the apostolic period. The writer had been in prison, but expected to be free soon to visit them. (Heb. 13: 19, 23.) So it is thought that the letter was written in A.D. 63.

Golden Text Explained

1. Jesus the Son of God. The angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to tell her that she was to be the mother of the Christ. He said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High . . . the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1: 32, 35b.) When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan, God spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3: 17.) Jesus called himself the Son of man (John 3: 13), which denotes his humanity. But the term Son of God denotes his divinity. The Jews tried to stone him for blasphemy because he called himself the Son of God, on the ground that the use of this term made him equal to the

Father. (John 10: 30-39.) Whether he is called Son of God because of an eternal relationship he sustains with the Father, or because of his incarnation, or his resurrection has been disputed by the greatest minds of the past. (Acts 13: 32, 33.) But it is sufficient for our purpose that he was called the Son of God, and that this title denotes his divinity and equality with the Father.

2. The Father Pleased with the Son. It is a fact that no expression of satisfaction was made until Jesus rendered public obedience to the Father in baptism. (Matt. 3: 17.) But he continued to please his Father by doing the will of the Father, doing the work the Father sent him to do, and glorifying the Father on earth.

(John 17: 4.) There are those who think they can please God without submitting to the outward ordinances of religion, such as baptism and the Lord's supper. But if Jesus, the sinless Son of God, could not fulfil all righteousness, nor be pleasing to God without submitting to the outward ordinances of religion in his day, how do men, sinful men, expect to do so today? Without faith, a faith that works by love, no man can be pleasing to God. (Heb. 11: 6; Gal. 5: 6b.)

3. **Hear Ye Him.** Because (1) he brought a message from the Father. "I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12: 49.) And (2) because his message brings life. When people were leaving Jesus, he asked the disciples if they also would leave him. Peter replied, "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6: 68.) Jesus said the truth taught by him will make us free.

(John 8: 32.) And a knowledge of him and the Father as revealed by him is eternal life. (John 17: 3.) Again, (3) he has all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28: 18.) Those who despised the law given by Moses died without mercy, and Paul reasons that those who despise the authority of Christ will suffer sorer punishment. (Heb. 10: 28ff.) Those who reject the words of the apostles, as preserved in the New Testament, reject Jesus who sent them; and those who reject him, reject the Father who sent him. (Luke 10: 16.) So it is a terrible thing to despise the authority of Jesus. (4) All who refuse to hear him shall be destroyed. Peter reminded the people that Moses promised a prophet from the people like himself, one whom they should hear in all things. "And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3: 23.) What this destruction is may be learned from Matt. 25: 41; Rev. 20: 12-15; 21: 8.

Exposition of the Text

I. Superior Messenger (Heb. 1: 1-4)

God, *having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets.* The writer takes for granted that his readers believe in God, and that they believe God had revealed himself to the human race. And we may be sure that he is writing to people who were familiar with the writings of the prophets, and who considered the writings of the prophets as God's message. The term *old time* refers to the time before the coming of Christ. The word *fathers* refers to people who lived in the old time. The prophets include Moses and all who had spoken down to the last one, Malachi.

By divers portions and in divers manners. By divers portions Paul means that the Old Testament was not revealed all at once. One portion was given now, and another portion then as needed. Some was given even before Moses, through Noah, Enoch, and others; much of it was given through Moses, but not all; David and other prophets were used to reveal God's will as needed. But in contrast to this Christ and his apostles have given us all we are to need, and to their writings there is

to be no addition. If other and more modern revelations are to be added there would be no contrast as is evident the writer intends. The divers manners in which God spoke refers to God's promises, prophecies, commandments, types and shadows, songs, and rituals.

Hath at the end of these days. Some have interpreted this to mean the Christian dispensation, but Jesus revealed much of the gospel before the Jewish age closed. Others say it means the last days of the Jewish age. But neither seems to be satisfactory. Paul divides the time of God's speaking into two divisions, before and after the coming of the Messiah. The days after his coming are the last days; they are the end of the days that God speaks to man. We live in these days, and they will continue until he comes again.

Spoken unto us in his Son. In old time the messengers were many, in these days there is but one messenger. The word *us* includes all who live in these last days. Paul is proving the superiority of the gospel to the law and prophecy by the superiority of the messenger through whom it was given. He did not entrust this

message to prophets, but used his Son.

Whom he appointed heir of all things. The word *appointed* may be taken in the sense of "constituted." When he was appointed heir is a subject of dispute. Paul says he is Lord of all creation, for all things were made by him for him. (Col. 1: 15, 16.) If he is Lord or possessor of all because he created all, we would conclude that all things have been his from creation. If he is heir of all things, he cannot lack anything to use for our help, happiness, and final victory and glorification. We have much for which to be thankful.

Through whom also he made the worlds. The Son is the agent through whom creation was done. (John 1: 1-3; Col. 1: 15, 16.) The plural *worlds* simply means this material universe composed of more than man has ever been able to see with the most powerful glasses.

Being the effulgence of his glory. The glory of God means all that is excellent and glorious; his perfections, his dignity and splendor. No man can behold this glory and live. But Jesus is the effulgence, or the emitted, reflected, splendor. We do not see the sun; we see beams of light from the sun. We cannot look upon God, but man could look upon Jesus who was the shining brightness of the glory of God. In him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead. (Col. 2: 9.)

The very image of his substance. The word *substance* refers to the essential nature of God. The word *image* suggests a character stamped by use of a die. So if God be looked upon as a die, the Son is the character made by the impression. He is the image of the invisible God. (Col. 1:

15.) All the perfections of God were manifest in him. Purity, mercy, love, goodness, justice, righteousness, tenderness, longsuffering, ability to read the hearts of men, to work all miracles, to forgive sins, all these and more constitute the image of God.

Upholding all things by the word of his power. He not only created all things, but he preserves them. In him all things consist. (Col. 1: 17.)

Made purification for sins. This purification is the effect of the offering made by him, and would be so

understood by Hebrew readers. Those who deny that the death of Christ has any atoning efficacy have no use for this verse. Jesus came to offer his body a sacrifice for the sins of the world. (Heb. 10: 3-10.) And through that offering he made purification.

Sat down on the right hand of God. This denotes (1) the accomplishment of his work of atonement. If he had not accomplished his work, why sit down? (2) It denotes exaltation to the throne. (Acts 2: 31-36; Eph. 1: 20-22; Phil. 2: 5-11.) The message God gave to us is through such a person as this, so a superior message.

Become so much better than the angels. Since the law was "spoken through angels," Paul seeks to show that the Son is greater than angels, therefore his message greater than their message. His proof is that he has inherited a more excellent name than they. This name is Son of God, used in such form as necessarily to imply deity. Had he not been superior to angels, he would not have been given this title. If he is so superior to angels, it follows that the message entrusted to him was superior to that given through angels. (Gal. 3: 19.) He now proceeds to give the proof by asking to which of the angels God said:

Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? Though angels are called sons of God, and so are we, yet not in the sense of the term used of Jesus, which use makes him equal with God. (John 10: 30, 33.) The point of emphasis here is that God called Jesus his Son, and that he never so called angels. The question as to the time, this day, gives no end of trouble. Paul used the statement as if it referred to the resurrection (Acts 13: 33), yet he was called the Son of God before that time. He was *declared to be the Son of God with power* by the resurrection. (Rom. 1: 4.) But that he was *constituted* Son of God at that time, or by that act, is not stated, nor is it true.

Let all the angels of God worship him. Whether the bringing in the firstborn refers to the birth of Jesus is not too clear, but regardless of that the sense is that angels worship him, and always the one worshipped is

greater than the one who worships; hence the Son is greater than the angels. They are but ministering spirits.

Thy throne, O God, is for ever. Here Jesus is called God; angels are never so called in the sense in which the word is here used. Hence Jesus is greater than they. He was to have a throne, so to be a king. He was to have a sceptre, so a king. His kingdom was to last forever and ever, and he was to rule in righteousness towards all.

II. Message to Be Heeded (Heb. 2: 1-4)

We ought to give the more earnest heed. This exhortation is based on what has gone before. The words of God through so high and holy a source as his Son cannot be neglected without great danger.

Lest haply we drift away from them. The word *drift away* suggests a picture of a stream flowing by. As driftwood goes along, so we may drift, float, away from the message. This is the opposite of the idea in King James version of letting the word get away from us.

Word spoken through angels proved stedfast. What part angels had in giving of the law is hard to determine. Stephen says it was ordained by angels. (Acts 7: 53.) Paul says it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. (Gal. 3: 19.) Moses said Jehovah came from Sinai, came from ten thousands of his holy ones (angels) and at his right hand was a law for his people. (Deut. 33:

2.) He also says the ten commandments were written with the finger of God. (Ex. 31: 18; 32: 16; 34: 28.) Heb. 12: 25 indicates that God spoke from Sinai. So the part angels had in delivering the law is at best uncertain. However the lesson here is not uncertain, for the writer means to teach us that we are more obligated to heed the gospel because the Son is to be more respected for his work in connection with the gospel than the angels were for their connection with the giving of the law.

Transgression and disobedience received just recompense of reward. Transgression is going beyond, doing things forbidden; disobedience is not hearing the law, failing to do

what is commanded. Each sin was rewarded as it deserved; none escaped regardless of high position.

How shall we escape if we neglect? The form of the question is an affirmation that we cannot escape. Notice that a neglect is sufficient to condemn.

So great a salvation. Great because (1) of its Author and Giver; (2) because of the price he paid to grant it; (3) because of that from which we are saved—power, pollution, guilt, state, consequence of sin; (4) because of that to which we are saved—a life of holiness and usefulness here, and of eternal happiness in the world to come.

Having first been spoken through the Lord. Jesus spoke of this salvation and taught much of it, though he could not tell them all about it for they were not able to bear it. (John 16: 12.) This salvation had been predicted by the prophets (1 Pet. 1: 10-12), but they could not know fully as it was revealed by the Lord and his apostles following. (Eph. 3: 1-7.)

Confirmed unto us by them that heard. Paul does not mean to say he learned the gospel through such confirmation, for he received it directly from the Lord. (Gal. 1: 11, 12.) But the gospel was generally confirmed to people by the apostles. They were with Jesus more than three years being taught by him. Then he gave them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth and enable them to work such miracles as were needed to prove the truth of their word.

God bearing witness with them. Mark says the Lord worked with them confirming the word by the signs that followed. (Mark 16: 20.) The confirmation was said to be (1) by signs by which is meant "any miraculous event" to prove the truth of what is uttered; (2) wonders, something unusual to arrest attention; (3) manifold powers, varying manifestations of divine power, such as healing the sick, and raising the dead; varying so as not to give the impression of limited means or ability; (4) gifts of the Holy Spirit, such miraculous gifts as were distributed among believers by the laying on of the hands of apostles for carrying on the work of the church and further confirmation of the word preached.

Topics for Discussion

1. That spoken by God through the prophets is preserved in the Old Testament; that which God has spoken through Christ is preserved in the New Testament. Not one commandment in the Old Testament is binding on us unless repeated by Christ in the New Testament. Yet the Old Testament is profitable to us in revealing the character of God.

2. Think of the condescension of

him who was God when he consented to be made flesh, be despised, rejected, condemned, and crucified by man whom he created. Then think of the exaltation of his humanity when he was raised from the dead, set at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

3. What greater sin can man commit than to neglect, pay no attention to, the salvation which required such condescension?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Did the people to whom Hebrews was addressed know who wrote it? Why?

What was the attitude of the eastern world towards the epistle?

When did the western world accept it as Paul's letter?

Name some great men of the first few centuries who accepted it as Paul's letter.

To whom was the letter written? Why?

The letter was written before what two outstanding events in Palestine?

What evidence do we have that it was written several years after the establishment of the church?

Golden Text Explained

What did Gabriel say to Mary?

When did God first publicly recognize Jesus as his Son?

What term denotes the divinity of Jesus? What his humanity?

Do you know why he was called the Son of God?

Why was the Father well-pleased with the Son?

Can we be pleasing to God by doing less than we required of the Son of God?

Give and discuss four, or more, reasons why we must hear God's Son.

Superior Messenger

What knowledge does the writer of Hebrews take for granted in his readers?

What division of time is meant by the "old time"? What prophets alluded to?

What is meant by "divers portions" and "divers manners"?

What is meant by "the end of these days"?

How does Paul teach the superiority of the gospel message to that of the law?

Of what was Jesus appointed heir? When?

What part did the Son have in creation of all things?

What is meant by the "effulgence of his glory"?

What is meant by the "image of his substance"?

What part does the Son have in the preservation of all things?

What is meant by making "purification for sins"?

What is suggested by the fact that the Son "sat down on the right-hand" of God?

What is the first proof given that the Son is better than the angels?

Do you know the day referred to when the Son was begotten?

What is suggested by the fact that angels of God worshipped the Son?

What proof do we have here of The divinity of the Son? What of his throne?

Message to be Heeded

Why should we give more earnest heed to the gospel?

How may we drift away from the words of the Son?

What part did angels have in giving of the law of Moses?

What is the meaning of transgression? Disobedience? Can you illustrate both?

How hurtful is the sin of neglect? Why is it a great sin?

Give and discuss four reasons why our salvation is so great?

Who first spoke of this salvation? What did prophets say of it?

How did Paul learn the gospel? To whom was it confirmed by the apostles?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson X—December 3, 1950

PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

The Lesson Text

Heb. 4: 14-16; 7: 26-28; 9: 24-28

14 Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Je'-sus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we have not a high priest

that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as *we are*. *yet* without sin.

16 Let us therefore draw near with

boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help *us* in time of need.

26 For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected for evermore.

24 For Christ entered not into a

holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own;

26 Else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment;

28 So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*” (Heb. 8: 1b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Zech. 6: 9-15.

Daily Bible Readings

November 27. M.....Priest After the Order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110)
 November 28. T.....Ruling Upon the Throne of David (Isa. 9: 1-7)
 November 29. W.....Mary's Son on David's Throne (Luke 1: 26-38)
 November 30. T.....Priesthood Changed to Tribe of Judah (Heb. 7: 11-25)
 December 1. F.....Jesus Not a Priest on Earth (Heb. 8: 1-13)
 December 2. S.....Christ Offered Himself for Us (Heb. 9: 11-22)
 December 3. S.....There Is No More Offering for Sin (Heb 10: 1-18)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63.

PLACE.—Written in Italy, probably Rome, to Hebrews of Palestine.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew converts.

Introduction

The prophets said that “the man whose name is the Branch” would be raised up and would build the temple of Jehovah, would sit and rule, “and he shall be a priest upon his throne.” (Zech. 6: 12, 13.) Jeremiah speaks of this righteous Branch of David, and says his name shall be “Jehovah our righteousness.” (Jer. 23: 5, 6; 33: 14-16.) That Jesus Christ is the one spoken of here is evident from the fact (1) that no one else on earth was ever worthy to wear the name of Jehovah, and (2) that he is said to have been made unto us wisdom and righteousness (1 Cor. 1: 30; 2 Cor. 5: 21); and (3) that he is the only one who can claim to be the Branch, or son of David who was raised up to rule. Mary was told that her son would be given the throne of his

father David, that he would rule thereon, and of his kingdom there would be no end. (Luke 1: 32, 33.)

Since he was to be a priest on his throne, we conclude (1) that he was not a priest and did not do the duties of a priest until he was seated on his throne; (2) that when he began to do the duties of a priest, he was on the throne of his father David; (3) that when his priesthood ends, his reign will end; and when his reign ends, his priesthood ends. That the priesthood of Jesus began when he ascended, entered into the most holy place not made with hands, to offer his blood for our sins, is taught abundantly. (Heb. 9: 11-14, 24; 10: 11-14.) His mediatorial reign ends with the resurrection, when death, the last

enemy, shall be destroyed, for then he delivers up his kingdom to God the Father. (1 Cor. 15: 23-28.) And at that time he ceases his work as priest, for now he is appearing before the face of God for us, which is doing the work of priest, but he will leave the presence of God and appear a second time to reward his people and punish the wicked. (Heb. 9: 24-28.) So we see his reign and priesthood begin at the same time and end at the same time. He cannot be a

priest on earth (Heb. 8: 4), hence he cannot be a king on earth since his priesthood and reign are to begin and end at the same time. He is a priest on his throne, but since his priesthood must be in heaven, it follows that his throne must be in heaven. And Peter said God raised up Jesus to fulfil his promise to David that he would set his seed on the throne; that Jesus ascended, not David, and that he is now Lord (ruler, king) in heaven. (Acts 2: 29-36.)

Golden Text Explained

1. Our Need of a Priest. (1) Man

is in need of a priest because he has sinned. Having sinned, man is in no condition to go to God to negotiate terms of pardon, nor has he anything to offer as an atonement for his sin. Without a priest man is doomed. (2) Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. (Heb. 9: 22.) We may not be able to understand why God cannot forgive sin without blood, but the Holy Spirit says it is true. The penalty for sin is death; we forfeit life when we sin. The life is in the blood. A life must be given for our sins. Jesus gave his life, shed his blood, for our sins. The statement "without the shedding of blood" simply means giving up one's life. So the life of Jesus was given in the place of our life as the penalty for our sins. (3) The blood of animals cannot take away sin. (Heb. 10: 4.) So we needed a priest who had better sacrifices than the Levitical priests. (Heb. 9: 11-14.) (4) We need a priest continually who will plead for us. If we had a priest who, through the offering of his blood, would cleanse us from our sins and then leave us on our own to do right from that time forward or be lost, the last one of us would be lost. We continue to sin, so we need one who continues to plead the worth of his shed blood in our behalf. (5) We need a priest who will be sympathetic, patient and longsuffering with us in our weakness and lack of love and loyalty. For the best of us are imperfect, and often times we are careless and forgetful.

2. **We Have Such a Priest.** (1) He was made like his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest. (Heb. 2: 17.) (2) He was

tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, so he is able to plead before God for us; and having suffered our temptations, he is able to understand us and to succor us when we are tempted. (Heb. 2: 18; 4: 15.)

(3) We have a continuing priest, seeing that he ever lives to make intercessions. (Heb. 7: 25.) The Levitical priests could not continue by reason of death; but he, because he abideth forever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. (4) He made a sufficient offering. The offerings under the law could not take away sins; they only "sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh" (Heb. 9: 13); but the offering of Christ cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve God: we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. (Heb. 10: 10, 14.)

3. **Who Sat Down on the Right Hand of God.** (1) By this it is intimated that he is King, for the right hand of God is the place of authority. And that he is to be a priest while he is king we have already seen. (2) By this it is intimated that his work of sacrifice is finished. If his work of sacrifice were not finished, he would not sit down, he would be still up and doing. He offered himself *once* for all people and for all time. (Heb. 10: 12.) And when he had done that, he "sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet." Henceforth, that is, from the time he sat down, he is expecting the fulfilment of the promise that his enemies will be made his footstool. This will be done when death, the last enemy, is conquered.

(1 Cor. 15: 24-27.) So he is on the right hand of God, a reigning priest, until the resurrection; then all will

be judged, and the wicked shall be destroyed and the righteous will be given eternal life.

Exposition of the Text

I. A Great Priesthood (Heb. 4: 14-16)

Having then a great high priest.

The Jews objected to Christianity because it had no priesthood and no sacrifices. And Jewish converts were often led back into Judaism that they might have visible priests and sacrifices. Paul wrote this letter to prove that we not only have a priesthood and sacrifices, but far superior to that of Judaism. He has proved that Jesus is greater than angels, greater than Moses, and he will prove that he is greater than Aaron, and his priesthood greater than the Levitical. (Chap. 7.)

Passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Paul does not mean to say that Jesus passed through the heaven where God is, but the visible heavens. (2 Cor. 12: 2.) Our high priest is Jesus the Son of God, not a son of Aaron. Here again the term *the Son of God* is used in such way as to denote deity. We have a divine priest, not a human priest with all his frailties.

Let us hold fast our confession. Let us not turn back from him whom we confessed as our Lord and Saviour. The purpose in writing this epistle was to keep people from turning away from Jesus and going back to Moses and the law. So Paul says since we have a greater high priest with greater sacrifices than the priests under the law had, we should hold fast to Christianity, lest we lose the greater for the lesser.

We have not a high priest that cannot be touched. Here Paul emphasizes the sympathy which Christ has for the sinner. Though he has gone into the presence of the Father, and is himself divine, he lived in human flesh, felt the force of temptation, suffered and sorrowed as all human beings do, and therefore qualified to sympathize with us in our sorrows. He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities because he had such infirmities. No doubt this was written to meet an argument made by the Jews which ran something like this: Yes, you claim you have a priesthood with sacrifices; but you claim

your priest is the Son of God; our priests are human beings who know our weaknesses, share our sorrows, and know how to sympathize with us.

In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are all there is of the world. (1 John 2: 16.) All worldly temptations may be summed up in these three things. Jesus was tempted in these three ways when he was offered stones to turn to bread, the kingdoms of the world, and when he was tempted to jump from the temple before the eyes of the people. (Matt.

4.) Incidentally these are the three ways in which Satan tempted Eve in the garden. (Gen. 3.) Eve was deceived by Satan, and she sinned; but Jesus, though tempted in the same way, resisted temptation.

Draw near with boldness to the throne of grace. (1) We may be bold, not reckless, in coming for help; coming in complete assurance that we will find him sympathetic towards us. (2) It is a throne of grace, not justice inexorable and unfeeling. God could have dealt strict justice to each one, but that would mean destruction to all. Being rich in mercy, he prefers to deal gently and kindly. By his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus made it possible for God thus to deal with us without being unrighteous. (Rom. 3: 24-26.) So (3) we are sure to find mercy and grace to help us in our time of need. And we will find ourselves in need when we (a) are under special temptations to do wrong; (b) when we are enjoying unusual prosperity; or (c) enduring special reverses and poverty (Prov. 30: 7-9); and (d) when sickness and death invade our home, taking those we love; and (e) when we, ourselves, walk through the valley of the shadow of death. We should go constantly to this throne of grace.

II. A Perfect Priesthood (Heb. 7: 26-28)

Such a high priest became us. By this is meant that he is exactly the kind of priest we, in our present con-

dition, need. "He is benevolent, and pities our woes; wise, and is able to enlighten our ignorance; compassionate, and ready to forgive our faults. He has made such a sacrifice as was necessary to put away our guilt, and offers such intercession as we need to have offered for us in order that we may be preserved from falling." (Barnes.)

Holy. The Greek word here is not commonly used of men, and Bagster defines it "supremely holy," giving this verse and Acts 13: 35; Rev. 15: 4; 16: 5 as instances of its use.

Guileless. The Greek word here means "free from evil, innocent, blameless." (Bagster.)

Undefiled. This word means "unstained, unsoiled, chaste." These three words are similar in meaning, and constitute a strong affirmation as to the holiness of Jesus. The Jews were most careful with references to their high priest keeping himself pure and free from all ceremonial uncleanness. On his mitre was inscribed "Holy to Jehovah." (Ex. 39: 30.)

Separated from sinners. Some take this to refer to his sinless life, but if so it is a needless repetition of the foregoing. It seems to be a reference to the fact that when the high priest went into the most holy place, no man was allowed in the tent until he came out. (Lev. 16: 17.) Our high priest has gone to heaven and is entirely separated from sinners while he does his priestly duties. And the next statement, *made higher than the heavens*, seems to justify this interpretation.

Who needeth not daily . . . to offer up sacrifices. Here is a contrast of priesthoods. The Jewish priests needed to offer sacrifices often, but not the Christian's high priest. There is a difficulty here in that the high priest did not offer sacrifices *daily*, but *annually*; and Macknight translates the Greek phrase, *from time to time*, instead of *daily*. He says the phrase in Ex. 13: 10 translated *from year to year*, is literally *from days to days*. There are three contrasts here between Christ and the Jewish high priest. (1) Jewish high priests offered for themselves as well as the people; Jesus offered not for himself.

(2) They offered often, year by year; Jesus offered once for all. (3) They

offered animals, but Jesus offered himself.

The law . . . but the word of the oath. Priests under the law were not placed in office by an oath. The office of high priest was inherited. But Jesus was made a priest by an oath of God. "The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever." (Heb. 7: 21.) This oath is said to be *after the law*, that it was sworn after the law was given. David knew that God had sworn to his Son, and Lord, that he should be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (Psalm 110: 4.) Since this oath was sworn after the law was given, this is proof that God did not intend that the law and the priests made by it should continue forever.

III. A Heavenly Priesthood (Heb. 9: 24-28)

Christ entered into heaven itself. Showing the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron, Paul says Christ does not perform his duties in a tabernacle made by hands, which is but a pattern of the true; but he performs his duties in heaven.

To appear before the face of God for us. This is the intercessory work of Christ. He suffered without the gate, and then went into the most holy place to offer, or to plead for us on the basis of that suffering. He appears before God for us; he pleads our case. The intercession will continue as long as he is before the face of God. When he leaves the presence of God, the intercession will be ended, the mediatorial reign will be over.

Nor yet that he should offer himself often. The superiority of Christianity is seen in the efficacy of its offering. One offering was sufficient for all sins for all time, but not so with the Jewish offerings.

With blood not his own. Here is another contrast between the two. The Jewish high priest went into the most holy place with blood not his own, the blood of an animal; but Jesus went into heaven with his own blood. Macknight argues that his wounds were preserved and shown in heaven as evidence of his suffering, but this seems a little strained. We are not to suppose that Jesus took actual fluid blood with him to offer.

But he plead the value of his suffering, the worth of his blood and the life in the blood which he gave up for the sins of mankind; and on account of this suffering he asked the Father to forgive all who will love and obey him. Those who do not love and obey him must suffer for their sins just as all mankind would if Jesus had never died for our sins.

Since the foundation of the world. If the offering of Jesus were not more worthy than the Jewish offering, he would have had to suffer often since the world began. The term foundation of the world means creation, but as in Luke 11: 50, 51, it can go no further back than the thing to which it relates, and in this case it is sin; so here it means since the first sin.

Manifested to put away sin. Jesus was manifested to destroy the devil and his works. (1 John 3: 8.) He was manifested to take away our sins. This, in the wise counsel of God, was to be done by the sacrifice of himself. Those who deny that the death of Christ has power to atone for sin

must deny the positive statement of God.

Appointed unto men once to die. Paul seems to be emphasizing the fact that Jesus offered his body but once, and since man dies but once in the flesh, so it is not to be supposed that Jesus would be called upon to offer himself in death repeatedly.

After that cometh judgment. Judgment follows death; it does not precede. So those who argue that all judgment we will have will be during life must deny this plain statement. Since judgment follows death, we conclude that all preparation must be made before death.

So Christ once offered . . . shall appear a second time. As we die but once and then go to judgment, so Christ died but once, and then will come again.

Apart from sin. With no intention of suffering for sin as he did at his first coming; but for the final salvation of all who are ready for him. No second chance; if we are not ready for him at the time of his coming, it will be too late to make ready, for he is coming in judgment.

Topics for Discussion

1. Every provision for man's happiness here and ultimate salvation in heaven has been made, so that if any one fails to go to heaven it will be his own fault. Indifference, love of the world, or rebellion against the authority of Christ will make it impossible for one to be saved. We should avoid them more than we would a poisonous serpent.

2. God provided such a high priest as man needs. Since God created man, he knows man's nature; God knows sin and what is necessary to atone for it, and on what conditions it may be forgiven. Man should trust him and be willing to do whatever he says to do, and he who refuses to do so acts as if he knows more than God.

3. Three important appearances of Christ. (1) He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb. 9: 26.) (2) He now appears before the face of God for us. (Heb. 9: 24.) And (3) he shall appear a second time unto salvation for all who wait for him. (Heb. 9: 28.) He could not appear before the face of God for us until he had appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He will not make the third appearance until the second is over. The second is his mediatorial, or priestly reign, and when he makes his third appearance, his priestly reign will be over; there will be no further opportunity to obey the gospel.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What did the prophets say of one to come whose name is the Branch?

What other name was he to wear? Give three reasons why this was Jesus Christ.

What two offices did the prophets say this man would hold?

When did his priesthood begin? When did his reign begin?

Can you prove that his priesthood and reign begin and end at the same time?

Why can Jesus not be a king on earth?

Can you prove that Jesus ascended to sit on David' throne?

Golden Text Explained

Give five, or more, reasons why we need a high priest.
 Why is Jesus called a merciful and faithful high priest?
 What experiences made Jesus able to plead before God for us?
 What benefit do we derive from a priest that lives forever?
 In what way does the offering of Jesus excell the Jewish offerings?
 What two lessons do we learn from the fact that Jesus sat down on the right hand of God?

A Great Priesthood

Why was it important that Christians understand that they have a great high priest?
 Name some ways in which our priesthood is greater than the Jewish priesthood.
 Why should Christians hold fast their confession?
 How did Paul teach that we have a sympathetic high priest?
 In what ways was Jesus tempted? How many avenues of temptation are there?
 In what attitude should we approach the throne of grace?
 Contrast a throne of grace with one of strict justice.
 Name some particular times of need when we should go to the throne of grace.

A Perfect Priesthood

Show why Christ is the kind of priest we need.

Name and define three characteristics which make Christ a perfect high priest.
 What is meant by his being separate from sinners?
 How often did the high priest offer for sins? How does this differ from Christ's offer?
 In what three ways is Christ's offering contrasted with that of the Jewish high priest?
 How did Jewish high priests come into their office?
 In what manner was Jesus made a high priest?
 What lesson do we learn from the fact that the oath was given after the law?

A Heavenly Priesthood

Where does Christ do his priestly work? Why does this make him superior to Jewish priests?
 What is meant by Jesus appearing before the face of God for us?
 Why did Paul mention the fact that Jesus made but one offering?
 What is meant by the offering of his blood for us?
 Why was Jesus manifested? What connection did his death have with this?
 Why was it necessary that Jesus die but once?
 What comes after death? Is there time for repentance between death and judgment?
 Contrast the purposes of his first coming and second coming.
 What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XI—December 10, 1950

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

The Lesson Text

2 Pet. 1: 1-11

1 Si'-mon Peter, a servant and apostle of Je'-sus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and *the* Saviour Je'-sus Christ:

2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Je'-sus our Lord;

3 Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue;

4 Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.

5 Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in *your* virtue knowledge;

6 And in *your* knowledge self-control; and in *your* self-control patience; and in *your* patience godliness;

7 And in *your* godliness brotherly kindness; and in *your* brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Je'-sus Christ.

9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

10 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:

11 For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Je'-sus Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever."* (2 Pet. 3: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 5: 11-14.

Daily Bible Readings

December 4. M.....	Grow By Every Word of God (Matt. 4: 1-11)
December 5. T.....	Eating the Living Bread (John 6: 48-65)
December 6. W.....	Word of His Grace Builds Us Up (Acts 20: 28-36)
December 7. T.....	Teachers Provided for Our Growth (Eph. 4: 11-24)
December 8. F.....	Progress in Knowledge Manifest to All (1 Tim. 4: 6-16)
December 9. S.....	Growing Unto Salvation (1 Pet. 2: 1-10)
December 10. S.....	Handling the Truth Aright (2 Tim. 2: 14-26)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 64 or 65.

PLACES.—Peter probably was in Babylon, those addressed in Asia Minor.

PERSONS.—Peter and all of "like precious faith."

Introduction

The first epistle of Peter has always been accepted as the work of that apostle, but the second epistle was doubted by some for the first two centuries. "Jerome says, 'Peter wrote two epistles called Catholic; the second of which is denied by many to be his, because of the difference of style from the former.'" (Barnes.) Eusebius said, "One epistle of Peter, which is call the first, is accepted; and this the presbyters of old have used in their writings as undoubted. But that which is circulated as his Second Epistle we have received to be not canonical. Nevertheless, as it appeared to many to be useful, it has been diligently read with the other scriptures." (Pulpit Commentary.) The Syriac version, called the Peshito, did not include the epistle. It was made at the last of the first, or the first of the second, century. Some argue that if the epistle had been in existence the translator would have included it, as he included the epistle of James, which was also at that time held to be doubtful. But the epistle was included in second Syriac version.

The Council of Laodicea, held in A.D. 366, recognized the epistle as canonical. It should be said that

Laodicea was in Asia Minor, the section of country where were situated the churches to which Peter addressed both his epistles, and that they had more right to know who was its author than others. All doubt as to its authorship had disappeared by the third and fourth centuries, until the question was opened again by some modern scholars of the modernistic type. There is plenty of evidence, both internal and external, to prove that Peter was the author of the epistle, and that it is inspired.

The place and time of the writing of the epistles we are not able to determine with any degree of satisfaction. Peter was in Babylon when he wrote the first epistle. (1 Pet. 5: 13.) The second epistle seems to have been written not too long after the first, and it is supposed that it was written from Babylon. Those who hold that Peter was bishop of Home say it was written from that city, not long before his death. Others who try to justify the difference of style in which this is written as compared with the first, say that it was written enroute from Babylon to Rome, where he later met his death. Some date the epistle as early as 63, others as late as 68, but most date it about A.D. 64 or 65.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Growing in Grace.** The word grace means favor, so to grow in grace means to grow, or advance, in the favor of the Lord. It is said that Jesus as a youth "advanced" in grace.

(Luke 2: 52.) When we cultivate the character which is pleasing to God, we grow in the grace of God. His eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers.

(1 Pet. 3: 12.) He favors the righteous, he is pleased with them. No man grows into the likeness of Jesus without intending to do it, and without putting forth a lot of effort in study, meditation, prayer, and self-denial. Gardens are not made without cultivation. Where little cultivation is done, there are weeds and thorns; the plants are weak, sickly, and unfruitful. So the soul that goes uncultivated by spiritual forces will be weak and unfruitful. It will not grow in the grace of God. Periods of worship, programs of service to the hungry, sick, and destitute, and times of Christian fellowship and association, have been arranged that people may cultivate the proper character; those who neglect these things will not grow in the grace of God as they would if they would take advantage of them.

2. **Growing in Knowledge.** We can grow in knowledge only as we study God's word. The knowledge required here is not a knowledge of the arts and sciences, but the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (1) We are to grow in the knowledge of his Person. We need to know that he had an existence with the Father before he became flesh. (John 1: 1-3, 14.) He is the creator and preserver of all things. (Col. 1: 15-17.) That while in human form he retained the lull powers of the Godhead. (Col. 2: 9.) That when he went back to heaven he did not lay aside his humanity. (Phil. 3: 21; 1 Tim. 2: 5.) (2) We are to grow in the knowledge of his character. He was holy and without sin, though tempted in all points like we are. He was compassionate towards the weak and erring, and willing to forgive all who would repent. He did not revile nor threaten

when he suffered at the hands of his enemies. He was humble, unselfish, not ambitious for worldly honor. He came to serve, not to be served by others. And we need to know that we are to fashion our lives after his. (3) We need to grow in the knowledge of his work. He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; to give his life a ransom for many. He came to destroy the devil and his works, and all who are allied with the devil will with him be eternally destroyed. He is now our mediator and high priest, and we need to know how to take advantage of his services in our behalf that we may derive the utmost good from him. (4) We need to grow in the knowledge of his purposes with us. He hopes to fashion us into his likeness that we may be ready to live with him for all eternity. He hopes to lift us above sin and make our lives useful in his service of saving others from sin. He plans to take us to heaven where we will continue to grow, as do the angels, in the knowledge of the glory, majesty, power, and holiness of God.

3. **Provisions for Our Growth.** Paul says Jesus gave apostles, prophets—that they might reveal the **word** to us—evangelists, pastors and teachers to teach us of the Lord, that we may grow into full manhood, lest we be carried about with every wind of doctrine. (Eph. 4: 11ff.) Since he authorized teaching, we conclude that periods for teaching and study are authorized. So we are to assemble to be taught as well as to worship. (Heb. 10: 25.) So we are provided the word by which we grow, and teachers to teach us. If we do not grow it is our fault.

Exposition of the Text

I. Growth Through Knowledge (2

Pet. 1: 1-4)

A servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. In some versions we have Simeon instead of Simon, but both **words** mean the same, *hearing*, so seem to have been used without distinction. Peter styles himself a bond-servant, slave, of Jesus Christ, instead of Pope, Father, Reverend, or any other high sounding title characteristic of those who claim to sit

in his chair in Rome. Our Lord came to serve; why should we wish to be more than a servant? There is no honor that exceeds the honor which belongs to those who serve Jesus Christ.

To them that have obtained like precious faith. Faith is obtained by hearing the word of God. (John 20: 30, 31; Rom. 10: 17.) Faith is precious because (1) it enables one to call on the Lord for salvation. (Rom.

10: 13, 14); (2) it purifies the heart (Acts 15: 9); (3) we are guarded through faith unto eternal salvation (1 Pet. 1: 4, 5); (4) we are justified by faith (Rom. 5: 1); (5) we are sanctified by faith (Acts 26: 18); (6) we walk by faith (2 Cor. 5: 7); (7) we overcome the world by faith. (1 John 5: 4, 5.)

In the righteousness of God. They had obtained faith in the righteousness of God. The word righteousness may refer to the character of God, or it may, as in Rom. 1: 17, mean the justification which is from God. It seems better here to say they believed in the righteous dealing of God who had given faith to them as well as all others addressed. The words God and Saviour probably refer to Jesus Christ. The article *the* is put in by the translators, and while the absence of the article in the Greek would not prove positively that the two words apply to Jesus Christ, it is a strong presumption in favor of it. And it is not unscriptural for the term God to be applied to Jesus. (Rom. 9: 5; 1 John 5: 20.)

Grace and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and Jesus. The favor of heaven is multiplied in the knowledge of God and Jesus; the peace which heaven gives to the soul is to be obtained through knowledge. Worry is multiplied in ignorance of what God has promised and what he is willing and able to do for us.

His divine power has granted all things that pertain to life and godliness. The life here mentioned is spiritual life, the Christian life; godliness means piety, or God-likeness. God has granted all things which are necessary to begetting this life, and the cultivation of it in the soul.

Through the knowledge of him that called us. All things necessary to life and godliness are given through knowledge gained from the study of scriptures. One who never studies the Bible will never have the things that pertain to life and godliness.

(1) The life is begotten by the word (1 Pet. 1: 23); (2) it grows by the word (1 Pet. 2: 2); (3) it gains inheritance in heaven through the word. (Acts 20: 32.)

By his own glory and virtue. The word glory here means the sum of

all God's glorious attributes; and the word virtue means the energy or activity of those attributes. By these things we are called, attracted and inclined to accept his invitation to come to him.

Granted unto us precious and exceeding great promises. The promises are precious in their nature and because of their value to us; they are exceeding great because they exceed our fondest imagination. (Eph. 3: 20.) The word *whereby* in this connection seems to suggest that these promises, the things promised, have their source in his glory and virtue, or the working of all his glorious attributes.

Through these ye become partakers of the divine nature. Through these promises contained in his word we partake of his nature. Without a knowledge of his word we cannot partake of his nature. Hence the absolute necessity of Bible knowledge. The divine nature of which we are partakers is the moral nature of God. We come to look upon sin as he looks upon it; we view righteousness as he views it. (Hab. 2: 13.) God's promises have such an influence on us that we partake of his nature, grow into his likeness, that we may enjoy the blessings promised. This is God's power unto salvation. These promises enable us to escape from the corruption characteristic of the world, and which held us formerly because of our lusts.

II. Elements of Christian Character

(2 Pet. 1: 5-7)

Adding on your part all diligence. We have seen (1) that God will give grace and peace; (2) he has granted all things that pertain to life and godliness; and (3) we are partakers of his divine nature, but there is something for us to do. *Adding on your part* refers to what we are to do in addition to what God has done. For if we do nothing for ourselves, all that God has done for us will go for nothing. And in all that we do we are to be diligent, zealous, intensely active.

In your faith supply virtue. One cannot become a Christian without faith, so these had obtained that precious faith. Now in *that faith* they are to supply virtue. **There**

seems to be no logical order in these several things named here; nor are we to suppose it is necessary to cultivate one before we can add the other. The word virtue is from a word which means courage, and in the trial to which people's faith is put there is need for courage.

And in your virtue knowledge. There are two Greek words used in our text which are translated by our word knowledge. The two are used in 1 Cor. 13: 12 where their meaning is clear, *know* in part, and *know fully*. Here we have the weaker word of the two which means understanding, prudence, discretion. In verse 8 we have the stronger word, fuller knowledge.

In your knowledge self-control. Knowledge without self-control is dangerous. And in men it never leads to holiness. (Rom 1: 20-23.) But without knowledge self-control would be of no use, hence the two must go hand in hand.

In your self-control patience. Patience is not stoicism, not stubborn animal resistance, but a conscious submission of the human will to the holy will of God, in the belief that since all things work together for good to them that love the Lord, all will be best for us.

In your patience godliness. Patience in sorrow and suffering develops piety, a disposition to love and trust in God. Those who are not patient murmur and complain on account of their lot: they evidence a lack of reverence for God and a lack of appreciation for what they have.

In your godliness brotherly kindness. Becoming more like God, we will be kind to all. This kindness will be shown in a special way to brethren, but in an ever increasing degree to all with whom we deal.

In your brotherly kindness love. It is good to be kind to all, but it is better to be kind because of a godlike love for them. We must love even our enemies, pray for them and do good to them, that we may be the children of our Father in heaven. (Matt. 5: 44-46.) Love is the cord that binds all other graces together, and gives to each the proper tone and quality. (Col. 3: 14.) Without love these other graces would be cold and formal.

III. Necessity for This Growth (2

Pet. 1: 8-11)

If these things are yours and abound. Notice the condition expressed. Not only does the writer wish these things to be in us, but he wants them in abundance. These should be the outstanding qualities of our characters; we should be known for them.

Not idle nor unfruitful unto knowledge. The abundant presence of these elements of character evidence our knowledge (full knowledge) and understanding of Jesus Christ. Those who have not these things say to the world that they have not arrived at a knowledge of him.

He that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near. Those who have not these graces are short-sighted; they are blind to the things which are for their best interests, for their salvation. They see only the things of a material nature, having their hearts set on worldly honors and advantages; they see not the things in the realm of faith.

Having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. At baptism they were cleansed that they might grow unto perfection; they came into God's family as babes with the intention, and for the purpose, of growing unto maturity. These purposes they could attain if they would cultivate these graces in their hearts and lives, but since they do not cultivate them it is evidence that they have forgotten their cleansing, their start as babes in Christ.

Give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure. God does the calling and the electing. He calls us through the gospel. (2 Thess. 2: 14.) The choice, or election, was from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (2 Thess. 2: 13.) From the beginning God has chosen to save people of a certain character, a submissive, obedient, faithful, loyal character. Those who are of that character are called, attracted, invited, by means of gospel preaching to the communion of God and the fellowship of Jesus Christ in his work of salvation. By diligently supplying these graces we make our calling and election sure, that is, we make ourselves sure of attaining the final ana-

eternal blessings for which we have been elected and called.

If ye do these things, ye shall never stumble. If children of God cultivate these graces to an abundance, they will never stumble, fall into perdition, be lost. But if they do not do these things, they will certainly stumble, fall into perdition. Our salvation depends on our faithfulness to do what the Lord demands of us. (1 Cor. 4: 2.)

Entrance into the eternal kingdom. Peter says *for thus*, in this manner, that is, by cultivation of these graces in addition to our faith by which we entered Christ, shall be richly sup-

plied an entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ. Our entrance depends on our cultivation of these graces. The eternal kingdom is heaven. The kingdom as it now exists is a mediatorial kingdom, the church, in which Jesus is King, leading us out of sin to himself, and into the cultivation of his likeness in our souls. But this kingdom will be delivered up to the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24-28) after the resurrection, for there will be no further need for mediation. But it is interesting to note that that eternal kingdom is said to be the kingdom of Jesus Christ, though he will be subject to the Father.

Topics for Discussion

1. Since God has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, we need no human additions in (1) items of worship; (2) church organizations; (3) societies for preaching the gospel; (4) or doctrines to be believed.

2. The cultivation of a godly disposition and character is the most important duty we have. But there are many who cultivate their fields, gardens, or lawns much more dili-

gently than they do their souls.

3. Entrance into certain social circles, fraternal orders, or business institutions holds the attention and absorbs the interests of some much more than entrance into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ. If people would work half as hard to make their calling and election sure as they work to get into social and fraternal orders, they would be sure to get to heaven.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the acceptance of Peter's two epistles?

Why was the second epistle not accepted as Peter's?

What council recognized his second epistle? At what date?

What do you know of the time and place of the writing of this epistle?

Golden Text Explained

In what is Jesus said to have advanced? Does this suggest a duty on our part?

What is said of the necessity for our growth in grace?

What provisions have been made for our growth in grace?

What knowledge of the Person of Christ should we have?

What knowledge of the character of Christ should we have?

What knowledge of the work of Christ do we need?

What knowledge of his purposes should we have?

What has been provided for our growth in knowledge? What use should we make of them?

Growth Through Knowledge

What is the meaning of the word Simeon, or Simon?

Contrast the title Peter gives himself with that of those who claim to follow him?

How is faith obtained? Why is it precious?

What is meant by the righteousness of God in our text?

Through what means are grace and peace multiplied to us?

What has his divine power granted us? What is the meaning of life? Of godliness?

Through what avenue are all these things granted unto us?

What will the word do for us? Will it do these things for us unless we know the word?

How great are his promises? Why are they precious?

What is meant by his divine nature? How do we become partakers of it?

Elements of Christian Character

To what is our diligence to be added? What does this addition mean on our part?

What place does faith occupy in the plan of salvation?

What is meant by virtue? When do Christians need it?

What knowledge is mentioned here? What is its place in God's plan for us?

Illustrate self-control and the necessity for it in our character.

What is patience? What will the lack of it cause one to do?

What is godliness? How is a lack of it evidenced?

What is brotherly kindness? To whom is it to be shown?
What place has love in the Christian's character?

Necessity for This Growth
To what extent are we exhorted to cultivate these graces?
What is the condition of one who lacks these graces?
What is meant by forgetting our cleansing from our old sins?
Who does the calling and electing? How are we called?

What is meant by election? Who are the elect?

How do we make our calling and election sure?

Is there a possibility of the elect stumbling? What is meant by stumbling?

What do we gain by a cultivation of these graces?

How does the eternal kingdom differ from the kingdom we are in now?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XII—December 17, 1950

TESTS OF A CHRISTIAN

The Lesson Text

1 John 5: 1-12

1 Whosoever believeth that Je'-sus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, *even* his faith.

5 And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Je'-sus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Je'-sus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

7 And it is the Spirit that beareth

witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son.

11 And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13: 35.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 15: 12-17.

Daily Bible Readings

December	11. M.....	A New Commandment for Christians (John 13: 31-38)
December	12. T.....	Keeping Commandments a Test (John 14: 15-24)
December	13. W.....	Obedience a Test of Friendship (John 15: 7-20)
December	14. T.....	Some Tests of Discipleship (Luke 9: 57-62)
December	15. F.....	Cross Bearing Test of Discipleship (Luke 14: 25-35)
December	16. S.....	Sound Doctrine a Test of a Christian (Rom. 16: 17-20)
December	17. S.....	Orderly Walk a Test of a Christian (2 Thess. 3: 6-15)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 85 and 90.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and all Christians.

Introduction

This epistle of John is not addressed to any church or individual; it is directed to the church at large, and for all time. As John lived in Ephesus, we suppose it was written there. As to the time when it was written we can only guess. He writes as an old man to a younger generation, so we suppose it was written late in his life. This letter has always been accepted by Christians as the writing of John. Polycarp, a pupil of John, mentions it; so does Irenaeus, the pupil of Polycarp; and Clement and Cyprian, as well as all the Greek and Latin "fathers" as they have been called, either mention or quote from it as the writing of John.

The purpose of the epistle primarily is to combat the Gnostic heresy, with probably one branch of that sect in mind, the Docetae. This branch believed that Jesus was not a real human being, that he did not come in the flesh, but that God created an impression in the minds of people that such a person lived among them. They denied his birth and the first thirty years of his life. "He first appeared on the banks of the Jordan in the form of perfect manhood; but it was a form only, and not a substance; a human figure created by the hand of Omnipotence to imitate the faculties and actions of a man, and to impose a perpetual il-

lusion on the sense of his friends and enemies." (Gibbon, by Barnes.)

The Gnostics were the "know-alls" of their day; they claimed a higher knowledge than others. The word Gnostic means knowledge. In the light of this higher knowledge very few things were sinful. Actions which seemed sinful to ordinary people were, to them, but means of enlarging their experience and understanding. So they paid little attention to moral standards. They believed that the body, as well as all matter, was impure. Out of this grew two evils. (1) They held that since the body was evil there was nothing wrong in, or at least they were not responsible for, the actions of the body. Consequently there was no sin, and so no need for an atonement.

(2) The incarnation of Jesus was both impossible and unnecessary. It was impossible because God could not become united with that which was evil as they believed the body to be; and it was unnecessary because there was no need for an atonement by suffering. In the light of this it will be worthwhile to re-read the epistle to look for two things. (1) John's rebukes to people who do not believe that Jesus came in the flesh.

(2) Since the Gnostics claimed to have a higher knowledge, it is interesting to note the things which John says the children of God know.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Letting Others Know.** Jesus taught that we are not to pray to be seen of men. (Matt. 6: 5.) He taught that we are not to do our good deeds to be seen of men. (Matt. 6:

2.) And when we fast, we are to wash our face and appear to men as usual; we are not to seek to make the impression that we are fasting. (Matt. 6: 16-18.) From this some people have got the idea that it is wrong to let people know of our good deeds. But the same Lord who taught those things said we are to let our lights so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and be caused to glorify our Father in heaven. (Matt. 5: 16.) In the first three verses mentioned Jesus is teaching that the *primary* purpose of our good deeds must not be to be

seen of men; but he did not mean to teach that it is wrong for us to let men see, or know, of our good deeds. It not only is not wrong for us to allow people to see us do good, but it is our duty to allow people to see us do good. We must take care that our motive is not to be praised by men; it is to be that God may be glorified. If we never allow men to know of our good, God would be robbed of the glory which he is due.

2. **Letting Others Know We Belong to Christ.** It is our duty to live in such way that men will know that we belong to Christ, that we are his disciples. Some church members live in such way as to make people think they belong to somebody other than Christ. People who do all their feeding of the poor, visiting the sick, re-

lieving suffering through a fraternal order, a civic club, or the Red Cross instead of doing it through the church of the Lord do not make the impression that they belong to the Lord; they do not live so as to cause the world to glorify God. The human organization gets the glory. Paul says we are to glorify God in the church and in Christ unto all generations. (Eph. 3: 21.) We should do these things in such way that all men will know that we are disciples of Christ, not of the world. It is not enough to say we do these things *through* these organizations as disciples of Christ. That is inconsistent. It is a *mark* of discipleship to do such work through Christ and the church; it is a *denial* of discipleship to resort to human organizations to do this work.

3. **Brotherly Love a Mark of Discipleship.** (1) This love of brethren is to be shown in caring for those who are in need. (1 John 3: 17.) The Jerusalem church demonstrated brotherly love in a remarkable way. (Acts 4: 32-37.) Paul urged the church at Corinth to give proof of their love by giving to the poor saints. (2 Cor. 8: 24.) (2) Love of the brethren is to be manifested by not being a respecter of persons, showing favors to the rich and powerful, while giving little or no attention to the

poor and weak. (James 2: 1-9.) Some of our large city churches, where those in the upper social and financial brackets worship, need to give attention to this point. It is easy to be guilty of this and not be conscious of it. (3) John says if we say we love God but hate our brother, we are liars. (1 John 4: 20.) People who do not love the brethren, regardless of station or position cannot love God, so are lost. *And love is not an absence of hatred.* Love is a positive characteristic. Can you prove you love the poor and insignificant? What have you done for them to prove your love? If you love them, you will be able to point to concrete deeds done, kindnesses shown; but if you cannot point out such things, you cannot prove you love them. If you cannot prove your love for them, how do you expect the world to see and know that you love them. If the world cannot know your love for them, you have no proof of your discipleship. For all men are to know you are a disciple if you love one another. (4) Churches which are wrangling and dividing over personal issues, as who will be elder, deacon, preacher, or song leader advertize to the world that they are not the disciples of Jesus. If they loved one another as they should, these troubles and divisions would never come up.

Exposition of the Text

I. Tests of Faith and Love (1 John

5: 1-5)

Whosoever believeth. The belief here is not something general. The Jews believed in God, but they did not have the faith required here. This is faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. One must believe that Jesus is Christ before he is begotten of God. The King James version says *born of God*, but when the word is used with reference to the father it is to be translated begotten; when used of the mother it is to be translated born. This is the test of faith. Those who believe Jesus is Christ are begotten of God; those who deny Jesus is Christ are not children of God. The belief here is not mere intellectual assent to the truth of a proposition, but an active, trusting belief.

Whosoever loveth him that begat.

If a man loves God, he will love all who are the children of God. Here is a test of love. Since those begotten of God partake of his divine nature, they have a lovable nature; and one who loves God will naturally love all who partake of that nature. So we can test people by their attitude toward brethren.

Hereby we know that we love the children of God. We can know that we love God's children when we know that we love God. And here is a test to determine whether we love God. If we do his commandments, we can be sure we love him. Obedience, then, is a sure test of our love for God; and our love for God insures our love for his children. So we have the three, faith, love, obedience as tests to determine

whether we are begotten of God. Those who are sure they are begotten because they love their brethren may find that they did not include enough tests. One may love his brethren and never be begotten of God, if his brethren are a group of people who refuse to obey God's commandments.

This is the love of God. Here the test is repeated. We manifest our love in obedience to his commandments. But this verse adds that his commandments are not grievous. This does not mean that his commandments are not *difficult*, for some of them are. But keeping them is not a galling experience if we love God. Many people outwardly conform to the letter of the commandments, but inwardly they murmur and complain about having to deny themselves of so many things, and of having to do so many things they do not enjoy. This is positive proof they do not love God. If they loved God, they would delight in keeping his commandments regardless of how difficult they may be.

Whosoever is begotten of God overcometh the world. The world is represented as our enemy. The world is all the combined forces of material evil which opposes us; the customs, ideals, maxims, principles, philosophies, influences of ungodly associates. There is no hope of overcoming by one's own wisdom and strength.

This is the victory . . . even our faith. Through faith we become children of God. Being children of God, we are united with Christ. Being united with him, we have his strength and wisdom available to use in our fight against the world. Through him we have the victory. (1 Cor. 15: 57.) In verse 5 John challenges any one to name him a man who has overcome the world except one who believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He might well say, Show me a man who has overcome the world, and I'll show you a man who believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The Gnostics boast of their higher wisdom and greater knowledge, but not one of them could prove that he had overcome the world through worldly wisdom. People do quit certain sins; they reform to some extent. But reformation is not all there is to overcoming the world.

This is a great challenge, and it may still be made to all who deny Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

II. Ground of Faith in Jesus (1 John 5: 6-9)

He that came by water and blood. The word *came* is not the emphatic word in the sentence, and is not to be taken to mean his birth, or coming into the world. He came before the attention of the world, and his coming was attested by water and blood. Some think this refers to the fact that when his side was pierced both water and blood came forth. (John 19: 34.) But if this were true, the next statement is awkward. *Not with water only, but with the water and with the blood.* When his side was pierced, they expected blood. So if it refers to this, the statement would have been, Not with blood only, but with blood and water. The water refers to his baptism, when the Father acknowledged him as his beloved Son. The blood refers to his death for our sins.

It is the Spirit that beareth witness. The Holy Spirit bore witness at his baptism by descending upon him in the form of a dove. (Matt. 3: 16.) He had the Spirit without measure to accompany him in all his teaching and work. (John 3: 4.) The Holy Spirit came to the apostles to guide them into all the truth just as Jesus promised, and in this way he bore witness of the truth of the things Jesus had said. Jesus had said that the Spirit would not speak of himself, but he would talk of the things of Jesus and show them to the apostles, so in this way he bore witness to Jesus as the Son of God. (John 16: 13-15.) And that Spirit which accompanied the apostles continually guided them into preaching Jesus, and their inspired messages bore witness to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

There are three that bear witness . . . they agree in one. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. John says Jesus has the required number of witnesses. His baptism, his death, and the Holy Spirit all bear witness to the fact that he is the Son of God. They agree in their testimony. They are not necessarily all the witnesses to

this great truth, but they are sufficient. The fact that they are in agreement on the point is of importance.

If we receive the witness of men. When three witnesses in court agree on a point, we receive it as true, if there is no suspicion of collusion. How much more willing we should be to receive the witness of God. In this it is suggested that the water, blood, and Spirit are God's witnesses. God so arranged that these should testify to the fact that Jesus is his Son. Those who saw Jesus baptized, saw the Spirit descend upon him, and heard God's voice acknowledging him as his Son could not doubt. Those who saw Jesus die, saw the sun refuse to shine at noon, heard and felt the earth quake, like the centurion were convinced he was the Son of God. (Matt. 27: 54.) And those who saw and heard the Spirit coming on Pentecost, who heard his words spoken by the apostles, could hardly doubt his testimony. A certified record of all this we have, so we have no excuse for unbelief. We have a sure foundation for our belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and through that faith we overcome.

III. Christians Have Life (1 John 5: 10-12)

He that believeth . . . hath the witness in him. The evidence which God has given and which has been accepted by the believer, together with the peace, joy, satisfaction, and ability to overcome sin have wrought a conviction in the heart of the believer that amounts to knowledge; so that the Christian can say, I know him whom I have believed. (2 Tim. 1: 12.) This witness in the believer is not some mystical physical feeling or experience "better felt than told," as excitable religious enthusiasts used to say, but a firm conviction based upon the evidence God gave of his Son.

He that believeth not God hath made him a liar. God arranged things at his baptism and death and on Pentecost so as to testify to the fact that Jesus is his Son. The one who disbelieves this testimony which God has borne must charge God with

falsehood. When the testimony of a witness is rejected, it is done on one of two grounds, falsehood, or ignorance. God cannot be charged with ignorance in this matter, so if Jesus is not his only begotten Son, he is guilty of bearing false witness.

And the witness is this. The sum and substance of the testimony amounts to this.

God gave unto us eternal life. It is necessary for us to learn what is meant by eternal life. Though the idea of eternity is in it, there is no indication that we have it in actual possession now and are incapable of losing it. We read that the righteous will *go away into eternal life*. (Matt. 25: 46.) It is a state of blessedness into which the obedient believers go. It is not something we have and feel, and cannot lose. Though John says God *gave* us eternal life, we are not forced to conclude that we have it in actual possession. God said to Joshua, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof (Josh. 6: 2), but he did not then have them in actual possession. So God has given us eternal life, but since it is a state of blessedness into which we go from the judgment, we will not actually possess it until we prove faithful through many trials.

And this life is in his Son. This life is in his keeping, to be enjoyed by all who believe in him as the Son of God, and obey his commandments. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3: 36.) Again, "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." (John 17: 3.) If this life is to be had and enjoyed in the Son of God, it behooves us to learn how to get into him that we may enjoy it. Paul says we are baptized into Jesus Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) Baptism, preceded by faith in Christ as the Son of God, repentance, and confession of our faith in him as God's Son, brings us into Christ where we have and enjoy all spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1: 3.) All who accept Christ on these terms have the Son,

and in the Son they have eternal life; so all who obey the gospel will have eternal life, but the disobedient will

be punished with everlasting destruction. (Matt. 25: 41, 46; 2 Thess. 1: 7-10.)

Topics for Discussion

1. John says, (1) whosoever be- lieveth is begotten of God; (2) every one that loveth is begotten of God (1 John 4: 7); and (3) every one that doeth righteousness is begotten of God. (1 John 2: 29.) From these statements we conclude that it would be wrong to say that one is begotten by either one alone, but by a *faith* that *works by love*.

2. Since it is the hope of all to overcome the world and enjoy eternal life, why is it that we will love the world and enjoy its pleasures? We avoid, run from, incurable diseases,

yet we court the world and its pleasures and indulge in them as much as we dare not to be so entangled as to lose eternal life.

3. Those who disbelieve in Jesus as the Son of God must accuse God of being a liar, the apostles of being deceivers, and all true Christians of all ages as being gullible, ignorant people. Those who occupy such a position should have the clearest indisputable evidence at hand, and should be busily engaged in giving it to others to save them from their ignorance.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

To whom is the epistle of John addressed?

What do you know of the place from which it was written, and the time?

What evidence do we have that this epistle was written by John?

What heresy did John combat in this epistle?

What two evils grew out of the Gnostic belief that the body, and all matter, are evil?

How many things can you name which John says we know? Search his letter.

Golden Text Explained

Why do some think we must do our good deeds in secret?

Why should we allow people to see us doing good? What of our motive in doing good deeds?

Through what are we to do things to the glory of God?

How can we do good deeds so as to prove to the world that we are disciples of Christ?

How can we act so as to deny our discipleship of Christ?

How can love of the brethren be shown? Give examples.

Can one be a respecter of persons in the church and prove his discipleship?

Is love merely an absence of hatred? Do we actually love all the brethren?

Can divided churches prove their discipleship of the world?

Tests of Faith and Love

By what kind of faith are we begotten of God?

What obligation does our love of God lay upon us with reference to brethren?

How can we know that we love the children of God? Who are his children?

What is meant by the commandments of God not being grievous?

Who overcomes the world? What is meant by the world?

What gives us victory over the world?

What challenge did John make to the unbelieving world?

Ground of Faith in Jesus

By what does John say Jesus came?

To what does water refer? How does it testify to the Sonship of Jesus?

To what does the blood refer? How does it bear witness to Jesus as God's Son?

What part did the Spirit have? How did he bear witness to Jesus?

How many witnesses are necessary to establish a truth or fact?

What is said of the testimony of these three witnesses?

Why are we obligated to receive the witness of God?

Why is the testimony of these witnesses referred to as the witness of God?

Since we did not have personal contact with these three witnesses, why are we obligated to receive their testimony?

Christians Have the Life

In what way do believers have the witness in themselves?

Why does the disbeliever make God a liar? How serious is this sin?

What is eternal life? In what relationship is it to be enjoyed?

What is meant by this life being in God's Son?

In what sense can we be said to have this life now?

How do we come into possession of this life?

What is the consequence of refusing to come into Christ to have this life?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XIII—December 24, 1950

DEALINGS WITH FALSE TEACHING

The Lesson Text

2 John 1-11

1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth;

2 For the truth's sake which abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever:

3 Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Je'-sus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoice greatly that I have found *certain* of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This

is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it.

7 For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, *even* they that confess not that Je'-sus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the an'-ti-christ.

8 Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your* house, and give him no greeting:

11 For he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them"* (Rom 16: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 20: 28-31.

Daily Bible Readings

December 18.	M. Traditions Make Void God's Word (Mark 7: 1-13)
December 19. T.....	Danger of Perverting the Gospel (Gal. 1: 6-17)
December 20.	W. Teaching Different Doctrines Condemned (1 Tim. 6: 3-10)
December 21.	T. False Teachers Named and Condemned (2 Tim. 2: 14-26)
December 22. F.....	False Teaching Must Be Stopped (Titus 1: 7-16)
December 23. S.....	Destructive Heresies Predicted (2 Pet. 2: 1-11)
December 24. S.	Neither Add to Nor Take From (Rev. 22: 8-19)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 80 to 90.

PLACES.—Ephesus for John, and the place where it was sent is unknown.

PERSONS.—John and a lady of eminence.

Introduction

The second epistle of John was not recognized as early as his first letter. The Syrian version did not contain it, but most of the early fathers regarded it as the writing of John the apostle. Irenaeus quoted from it, and called it the writing of "John the disciple of our Lord." Since he was born in Smyrna, near Ephesus, and was the pupil of Polycarp, who was the pupil of John, his testimony is of great value. If any one had a right

to know the authorship of the letter, he did, both from the fact that he lived in the vicinity of the writer and the one to whom it was written, and from the fact that he was taught by a man who was taught by the writer. The fact that this letter was addressed to an individual might account for it not being widely known for some years after it was written.

There are those in the church who do not realize the importance of keep-

ing the teaching of the church pure. They attach little value to what they call abstract doctrine, but a careful study of the Daily Bible Readings of this lesson will lead one to realize that the Lord has great concern for the purity of the doctrine of the Bible. Our doctrine, what we believe and teach, determines our life. If we have little respect for the doctrinal statements of the apostles, we will

have little respect for what they say with reference to our daily life. If we reject a doctrine because it does not sound reasonable to us, we will also refuse to do what the Lord says because we cannot see a reason for doing it. The Lord is testing us for complete submission to his will, and those who fail to stand the test either in doctrine or practice will fail to meet the Lord's approval.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Mark False Teachers.** The word *mark* means to watch carefully, diligently. One in a tower watching the movement of an enemy would be *marking* the enemy, according to the use of this word. Those who are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling are the men to be marked. Macknight's translation of this verse is good. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who set up separate assemblies for worship, and who occasion the weak to fall by false doctrine, or by enjoining things indifferent as necessary, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned from me in this epistle, and avoid them." While the word *marked* does not of necessity include the idea of publishing the false teacher, the interest which we have for the church will cause us to do so. Paul knew of certain men who taught false doctrines, and he warned others of them so that they might be careful. (2 Tim. 2: 17.) So when one is found to be teaching hurtful doctrines, it becomes the duty of him who first learns it, to warn others if the false teacher cannot be corrected. But because such public warning may cause some unpleasantness in the church many refuse to engage in it. These through pride have more regard for the good opinion of the community than they have for the purity of the church or the approval of the Lord. Paul says we are to have no fellowship with such, but even reprove them. (Eph. 5: 11.) He who fails to reprove fails in half his duty to the Lord. Preachers of the gospel and elders of churches cannot escape the responsibility of doing such.

2. **Standards to Use.** We are not left to our own opinions as to whom to mark. We are to mark them who are causing divisions and occasions

of stumbling *contrary to the doctrine* of the apostles. Paul says, "if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle." And again he says we are to withdraw from all who do not walk after the traditions received from him. (2 Thess. 3: 6, 14.) Again, "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 1: 13.) Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to teach certain men not to teach a different doctrine, nor to give heed to fables. (1 Tim. 1: 3, 4.) If man or angel preach anything different from what the apostles preached, he shall be anathema. (Gal. 1: 8, 9.) Jesus condemned the Jews of his day for departing from the law of Moses and doing things not commanded, and commanding others to do likewise. (Matt. 15: 1-9.) We are to be content to preach what is revealed through inspired apostles. Since they were guided into all the truth, it follows that anything more or different from what they preached is no part of truth. That which is not truth, is from the devil, for he is the father of lies. (John 8: 44.) To preach that which is not true is to serve the devil, and all who serve him here will have to spend eternity with him. Hence the seriousness of failing to preach the truth.

3. **Turn From Them.** Does this imply concerted church action expressed in withdrawal of fellowship? Or does it mean for individuals to shun or avoid such characters lest they be contaminated with the false teaching? Paul told the Thessalonians to withdraw themselves from all who walk disorderly, and not after the traditions received from him. (2 Thess. 3: 6.) This looks like public condemnation and exclusion from the

fellowship of the church. But in another verse he says if any one obeys not his word, "note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (2 Thess. 3: 14, 15.) Paul says we are to refuse a factious man after proper admonition. (Titus 3: 10.) A factious man is one who follows a heresy, or false doctrine. Our word factious is defined as one given to causing dissensions, but this covers more ground than the Greek word which limits

it to causing trouble by teaching false doctrine. From all we can find on the subject it seems that one who teaches false doctrine should (1) be corrected, if he will take it; (2) warned to cease his false teaching; (3) exposed so as to stop him (Titus 1: 9-11); and (4) excluded from the fellowship of the church as a last resort to save him and the church. False teaching spreads like gangrene (2 Tim. 2: 17), so must not be allowed to continue in the body. Elders have the duty of seeing that it is stopped.

Exposition of the Text

I. Truth With Us Forever (2 John 1-3)

The elder unto the elect lady. John did not use his name in connection with any of his writings, and it is idle to guess why. Here he called himself "the elder." Since the church at Ephesus had a number of elders (Acts 20: 17), John would not use this term to mean the office of elder. The word means aged, older. So he refers to himself as an aged man. The term *elect lady* has been much disputed. Some think it refers to the church. It most likely refers to an eminent Christian lady of John's acquaintance. He speaks of her children, of her sister and her children sending greetings, and he promises soon to visit her. He warns her not to receive false teachers into her house. All these things suggest that the letter is addressed to an individual.

Whom I love in truth. This means that his love is sincere. It also implies that this woman was worthy of love. Certainly the aged apostle would not express himself with regard to one whose life and character were not thoroughly Christian.

Also all they that know the truth. John says he is not the only one that loved this woman, but all who knew the truth loved her. This implies a large acquaintance, so she was known to many for her Christian character. Some have guessed that verse 10 implies her hospitality, and is a warning to her to be careful not to entertain false teachers. But we have no way of knowing what particular thing, or things, it was

for which she was so well known and universally loved. But as she excelled in one or more Christian graces and was honored by the apostle, so all women should seek to excel in the things they are capable of doing that they may meet the Master's approval.

For the truth's sake which abideth in us. John says the love he, and all who know the truth, have for her is for the sake of truth. Macknight says this love is produced through the truth, through the influence of the gospel. This is a more literal translation of the preposition. Then he says the truth abides in us, and that it shall continue to abide in us forever. Our hearts are looked upon as houses, temples, in which the truth of God can abide, and be sheltered from the misuse and perversion of enemies. This treasure we have in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be seen to be of God, and not from ourselves. (2 Cor. 4: 7.) Since the truth is precious, we should guard it well; since it is powerful, we should use it to the salvation of many souls; since it is a trust imposed upon us (1 Thess. 1: 4), we should keep it pure and unmixed with human traditions; and since it has enemies who would abuse it, we should contend earnestly for it. (Jude 3.)

Grace, mercy, and peace. This is the usual salutation. It is a prayer that God and his Son will favor you, be merciful to you, and give you the peace that passeth understanding. These blessings are said to proceed from both the Father and the Son, showing that the Son is equal with

the Father in bestowing such heavenly blessings.

In truth and love. Macknight renders this phrase as follows, "together with the possession of truth, and of love to God and man." In other words he prays that they may not only have grace, mercy, and peace, but also they may have the truth and love of God and man in their hearts.

II. Walking in the Truth (2 John 4-6)

I have found thy children walking in truth. Some of this woman's children had no doubt been to Ephesus and had contacted John. What is more natural than that they were in the big city over the week-end, and that they worshipped where John was preaching? John rejoiced to find them faithful to worship the Lord. It is always a matter for rejoicing when parents bring up their children in the right way; and it is commendable in the children for them to heed parental instruction and counsel. To walk in the truth is to live in harmony with its teaching, not only in morals, but in the principles, or what is commonly called doctrines, of the gospel. Walking denotes activity. They were actively engaged in gospel labors.

That we love one another. John says this is no new commandment, but one which they had from the beginning of the gospel. John said much in his Gospel about the love which disciples should have for one another. (John 15: 12; 13: 34, 35.) He mentioned it in his first epistle. (1 John 3: 13-17; 4: 7-11, 19, 20; 5: 1-3.) It is needed in these busy times when we do not have time to get acquainted with each other, to sympathize with each other, or to know each other's needs well enough to do our Christian duty to one another.

And this is love. John says that walking in the commandments is love. By this he means that keeping the commandments is a proof and manifestation of that which is in the heart. Love, like faith, cannot be seen except as it is manifested through actions. (James 2: 18.) So one who never does anything for another cannot prove he loves the other. People think they love the poor, but

the only evidence is the fact that they do not hurt or harm them. If the love of God had been that kind, he never would have sent his Son to die for us. Love is active; it does something for its object.

This is the commandment. Some think John refers here to the command to believe in Jesus as God's Son, but the connection is remote. The only thing to justify it is the trend of the following verse. But it seems better to think he refers to our love for each other by which all men are to know that we are his disciples. It is a commandment in which we can, and must, walk. Walking in this commandment to love one another will cause us to do good to the brethren, to encourage and strengthen them in time of temptations and trials, and to protect them from the influence of false teachers. It is this duty which leads to the change in thought in the verses following.

III. No Fellowship with False Teachers (2 John 7-11)

Many deceivers are gone forth. Not a few, but many; and for this reason it is all the more necessary for all to watch lest they be deceived. These deceivers are described as disbelieving in Jesus as the Son of God. They did not deny that such a person as Jesus lived, but they denied that he was Christ; and they affirmed that Christ would never come in the flesh. This doctrine fits the Gnostics of John's day who held that the body was unholy, as is all matter, and that divinity could not consistently abide in an unholy body of flesh. There are many in the world today who admit that a person named Jesus lived, and that he was a great teacher; but they deny his divinity for various reasons. They are to be classed with these deceivers. The word *deceiver* means a seducer, one who causes others to fall. If it were impossible to fall, why would John warn this Christian lady.

This is the deceiver and the anti-christ. John uses the term anti-christ in four places. (1 John 2: 18, 22; 4: 3.) Is the anti-christ a person, or is it a principle found in many persons? From this use of it we might decide on the latter. Many

deceivers went out . . . this is the deceiver and the anti-christ; and this deceiver was the denial that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Look to yourselves. In view of the many deceivers abroad, we are to be watchful, lest we lose not the things which have been wrought in us by our teachers. This clearly teaches (1) that a person can be seduced by a false teacher; (2) that one so seduced will constitute a loss to the teacher; (3) material which does not stand the test is burned (1 Cor. 3: 12-15), labor bestowed on those who finally apostatize is spent in vain. (Gal. 4: 11; 1 Thess. 3: 5.)

Whosoever goeth onward. This means to go beyond; to teach and practice things not contained in the teaching of Christ. It is not to be limited to the doctrine of the anti-christ that Jesus had not come in the flesh as Christ. That certainly would be included because it is beyond, contrary to, the teaching of Christ; but all other false doctrines are clearly within the limits of this principle.

Hath not God. Men forfeit the fellowship and communion of God when they teach things not contained in the gospel of Christ. This has been denied by denominational teachers on the ground that it is narrow, but it is the meaning of the verse. It has also been denied on the ground that the loving John would not, could not, use such strong language. But he who wished to call down fire (Luke 9: 54), who was called a "son of thunder" (Mark 3: 17), could well be capable of such language, especially if the Holy Spirit gave him the words to use against the enemies of his Lord. The burning of incense, mechanical instruments of music in worship, sprinkling of water for bap-

tism; the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy, salvation by faith only, the return of the Jews to Palestine and the personal reign of Jesus on earth for a thousand years after his coming, all these are clearly beyond the teaching of Jesus as revealed by the apostles. Those who teach such have not God.

He that abideth in the teaching.

He has both the Father and the Son. This, of course, does not mean that one can disregard moral standards and have the fellowship of God and his Son solely on the ground that they are doctrinally right on all points. One must abide in the doctrinal, moral, and spiritual teaching of Jesus to enjoy communion with the Father.

Receive him not into your house.

This does not have reference to neighborly association with those in the community, for we are to associate with them as much as is necessary to convert them. But this applied to preachers going about, who, in those days, depended on the community to feed and lodge them. (Luke 10: 3-11.) If the stranger at the door had no letter of commendation, the host asked him of his faith. If he denied the doctrines of Christ, and especially that Jesus had come as Christ in the flesh, he was to be denied food and rest. He was not even to be given the usual blessing of "grace be with you."

Partaketh in his evil works. From this we learn (1) that going beyond the teaching of Christ is an evil work; (2) that if we help such teachers financially, or by giving them food and lodging, we are having fellowship in their error; (3) that to have fellowship in this way with false teachers is to be a party to the crime, sin, of which they are guilty.

Topics for Discussion

1. Truth is indestructible; it will abide forever. But whether it abides in one group or party of people is always problematical. It did not abide with the first churches long; they departed from the truth, and went into Catholicism. We can lose the truth today, and there are signs of departure in many congregations; there are trends and tendencies which indicate another apostasy unless peo-

ple study more and contend more earnestly for the faith. But the truth will be here regardless of what group of people uphold it. And that group of people upholding it will be the church of the Lord in its generation.

2. The Jews went beyond the teaching of Moses in the washing of hands as an act of worship, and it

rendered their worship vain; not just that act, but all their worship was vain on account of that added item. So when people today add an item not authorized by the Lord, a human tradition, their whole program of

worship is rendered displeasing to God.

3. People who contribute money for the building of church houses to be used for teaching false doctrines have fellowship with those teachers in their evil work.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What early fathers recognized 2 John as the writing of the apostle?

Why would this letter be late getting into circulation?

Why is it important to be right doctrinally?

Is it necessary that we see a reason for all the Lord teaches?

In what two ways may we show our complete submission to the Lord?

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the word mark?

Who is to be marked?

Is it right to publish those who you mark?

Why do people fail to mark and publish false teachers? Is this right?

What two things does Paul say we should do to workers of darkness?

What is the standard by which we are to measure teachers? Give scriptural proof.

Who is the source of truth? Of error?

Whom do we serve by teaching error? Is such service pleasing to God?

What is to be our treatment of false teachers?

Does this mean always exclusion from the fellowship of the church?

What is a factious man? What is to be our treatment of him?

Give four steps in the treatment of a false teacher. Who should take the lead in this?

Truth With Us Forever

What is the meaning of the term elder in this lesson?

What is meant by the elect lady?

How does John describe his love for this lady? Who else loved her?

What is implied as a reason for people loving this woman?

What lessons are suggested by the fact that the truth abides in us?

What is the meaning of the terms of the salutation?

What statement here shows that the Son is equal with the Father in giving these blessings?

What else does John pray that this woman may have?

Walking in the Truth

In what did John rejoice? What is meant by walking in the truth?

What is suggested here as to the way this woman trained her children? What is implied as to the response of her children?

Give the sum of the teaching of John on love.

How is love manifested? What other Christian grace is like it in this respect?

Can we say we love people unless we have concrete proof in deeds done for them?

What does the idea of walking suggest as to the action of love?

No Fellowship With False Teachers

What is the meaning of the word deceiver? What is suggested as to their number?

What particular doctrine was denied by them? Do we have such deceivers with us now?

What bearing does this warning have on the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy?

Give the sum of John's teaching on the anti-christ.

Give and discuss three lessons suggested in verse 8.

What is meant by going onward and abiding not in the teaching of Christ?

What is the penalty for going beyond the teaching of Christ?

Could John use such strong language as this? Give reasons for your answer.

On what condition may we have God with us?

Can Christians associate with neighbors who are wrong religiously?

Whom must we not receive into our homes? On what customs was this command based?

How do we become partakers of evil works with false teachers?

How may people be guilty of this sin today?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XIV—December 31, 1950

WARNINGS AGAINST APOSTASY

The Lesson Text

Jude 3-15

3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to

contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept

in privily, *even* they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Je'-sus Christ.

5 Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of E'-gypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sod'-om and Go-mor'-rah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

8 Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities.

9 But Mi'-cha-el the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Mo'-ses, durst not bring against him a railing

judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

10 But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed.

11 Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Ba'-laam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Ko'-rah.

12 These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 Wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.

14 And to these also E'-noch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones,

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (1 Cor. 10: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Pet. 1: 5-12.

Daily Bible Readings

December 25. M..... No Pleasure in Death of Wicked (Ezek. 33: 7-20)
 December 26. T..... Unfaithful Servant Cast Out (Matt. 25: 14-30)
 December 27. W..... Unfruitful Tree Cut Down (Luke 13: 6-9)
 December 28. T..... The Mind of the Flesh Is Death (Rom. 8: 1-17)
 December 29. F..... Examples of Apostasy (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)
 December 30. S..... Impossible for Some to Repent (Heb. 6: 1-12)
 December 31. S. Entangled a Second Time in Sin (2 Pet. 2: 12-22)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 68 to 70.

PLACES.—Unknown.

PERSONS.—Jude and Christians generally.

Introduction

The epistle was written by Jude, the brother of James; some versions say "son of James." Was this Jude, or Judas, an apostle? Was he the brother of James the son of Alphaeus? Standard authorities on such matters are hopelessly divided on the subject. Barnes, Harmon, and Macknight say he was an apostle, a brother of James the son of Alphaeus, called "the less" (Mark 15: 40). and

that he and James were cousins of Jesus. But to reach such a conclusion they must make Mary the mother of Jesus have a sister also named Mary, who was the wife of Clopas, which some say is another form of the word Alphaeus. McGarvey (Fourfold Gospel, pp. 223-226), A. T. Robertson, and Smith's Bible Dictionary are among those who say Jude and James were brothers of Jesus, children of

Mary. (Matt. 13: 55.) Neither of them was an apostle, for none of his brethren believed in him until after his resurrection. (John 7: 5.) His brethren are mentioned separately from the apostles after the resurrection. (Acts 1: 13, 14.)

The epistle of Jude, like other general epistles, was not accepted widely as soon as the majority of the books of the New Testament. It was not in the Peshito version used in eastern churches as late as the fourth century. The earliest appearance is in what is called the "Muratorian Fragment," circulated late in the second century. Eusebius mentions it, and Origen quotes from it many times. He says, "Jude wrote an epistle of but few verses, yet filled with vigorous words of heavenly grace." He also calls Jude the Lord's brother. Both Tertullian and Jerome, Latin "fathers," quote from this epistle, and call Jude an apostle. "The uncertainty as to its author, and his standing in the church, the unim-

portant nature of its contents, and their almost absolute identity with 2 Peter 2, and the supposed quotations of apocryphal books" are reasons suggested for its late acceptance. This should not cause us to think less of the epistle, but rather should cause us to have more confidence in it as a work of inspiration. The fact that scholars and churches were slow to accept letters, and that they were subjected to rigid tests before they were accepted, gives us ground for confidence in them as the work of inspired men. There were hundreds of epistles written during the first century, some of them by such men as Barnabas and Clement, which could not pass the rigid tests. Less is known about the date of this letter than most books. Some place it as late as A.D. 90, but none earlier than A.D. 65. The majority think it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, or mention would have been made of that event.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Possibility of Apostasy.** (1) The fact that more than half a million people fell from grace and died in the wilderness during the forty years wandering should be ample proof that it is possible for people to fall. (Heb. 3: 12-19.) And (2) the warnings we are given "that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4: lib), should cause us to think it possible to fall. (3) In the church at Laodicea we have an example of apostasy, which, if not corrected, caused all connected with it to be lost forever. (Rev. 3: 14-22.) a. They were children of God, for he was chastening them, and this is God's treatment of children. (Heb. 12: 7-11.) b. Christ had been dwelling in them, but now he is outside, knocking for entrance, because they were reprobate.. (2 Cor. 13: 5b.) c. Because they were lukewarm God will spue them out, sever relations with them, unless they repent; the law is, repent or perish. (Luke 13: 3, 5.) So if these children of God did not repent, they perished. (4) Simon became a child of God and then sinned so as to be lost if he did not repent. (Acts 8: 13-24.) That he was a child of God is proved by

the fact that Peter told him what a child of God must do for remission of sins, and not what an alien sinner must do.

2. **Persons Warned.** "Him that thinketh he standeth." This is addressed to church members, children of God. (1) There are those, like the one talent man, who think they can be saved without accepting responsibilities in the church. They have been baptized into the fellowship of the church, they take the Lord's supper, and attend one period of worship a week; but they will not teach a class, lead a prayer, visit the sick, or do anything else to be done in the church. They will accept responsibilities in their social, civic, or fraternal organizations, but not in the church. (2) Those who are meticulous about their doctrine, but not careful at all about their morals. They seem to think they are going to get to heaven because they believe and teach the correct doctrine. (3) Those who are careful to be honest and upright in their dealings with their fellowman, faithful to attend church, but who think it not worthwhile to be careful about their doctrine, or the doctrine and practice of others. They

seem to think moral goodness is enough regardless of how many false doctrines they hold. Paul cautioned Timothy to be careful of both life and doctrine. (1 Tim. 4: 16.)

3. **How to Keep from Falling.** Take heed; be watchful. (1) Realize that we cannot stand alone against the devil. Do not be so foolish as to think we know more, have more power, or can outwit Satan. Be humble enough to realize the need of the Lord. (2) Self-examination daily to detect the slightest trends away from God, and correct them before we get started in the opposite direction from God. Trends and inclinations are

more easily handled and corrected than habits of long standing. They do not involve the necessity of public confession which some find most difficult. (3) Pray daily. Clear up everything with God at the close of the day; never begin a new day with old sins unconfessed and unforgiven. Pray for deliverance from the evil one. (Matt. 6: 13.) (4) Read God's word daily and be warned by the mistakes of even the best men, and get encouragement from God's gracious and compassionate dealings with men in time of temptations. Lay up the word in your heart. (Psalm 119: 11.)

Exposition of the Text

I. Purpose of Epistle (Jude 3, 4)

I was giving all diligence to write. Jude was giving serious, earnest thought as to what was best to write concerning the common salvation. It is **common** in that it is free to all, none are excluded. It is not common in the sense that its Giver, its nature, or the blessings it affords are of little value.

Contend earnestly for the faith. The faith mentioned here is the gospel, a system of faith as opposed to the law, a system of works. People obeyed the faith (Acts 6: 7); faith came after the law (Gal. 3: 23, 24); and there is one faith. (Eph. 4: 5.) The word **contend** suggests the idea of a soldier in full armor defending a piece of ground allotted to him; he is to defend it against misuse and abuse by an enemy. So the faith, the gospel, has been delivered to us, and we are to defend it against perversion and misrepresentation. We cannot use force to prevent perversion, but we can expose (Acts 18: 27, 28; Titus 1: 9-11), and refuse to have fellowship with false teachers. (Eph. 5: 11; 2 John 10, 11.) Jesus contended for the truth when he exposed the false doctrines of the Jews. (Matt. 15: 1-9.) Stephen contended for the truth when he disputed with the Jews in Jerusalem. (Acts 6: 9, 10.) Our cause grew to its present proportions by contending for the faith. Brethren who get so sweet-spirited they refuse to follow the Lord and his apostles in contending

for the truth will find themselves compromising the truth and losing ground instead of gaining.

Once for all delivered to the saints. The gospel has been delivered **once for all**; it is not to be revealed anew for each succeeding generation; there are no new parts to be revealed by "latter day saints"; it is complete. The revelation was made to saints, that is, apostles and prophets of Jesus. (Eph. 3: 4, 5; 1 Pet. 1: 12.) "Now, as they have expressed these things which were revealed to them, in words dictated by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2: 13), we are to contend, not only for the things contained in their writings, but also for that form of words in which they have expressed these things, lest by contending for forms invented and established by human authority, as better fitted to express the truth than the word of inspiration, we fall into error." (2 Tim. 1: 13.) (Macknight.)

There are certain men crept in privily. The truth has always had its enemies, men seeking to turn people from it. (Acts 13: 8.) But their condemnation has been written—meaning that similar characters were condemned, so these of Jude's day may expect the same. They turned the grace of God into lasciviousness by teaching that God is so good and gracious that he will not punish men regardless of how far in sin they go. We have many in the world to-day who think God will not punish the wicked. They should read Jude's condemnation.

II. Examples of Punishment (Jude 5-7)

The Lord, having saved a people . . . destroyed them that believed not.

Jude reminds his readers of the fact that God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, and then destroyed all who believed not and were disobedient in the wilderness. The application is that those who become children of God, delivered from the bondage of sin, may lapse into sin again and God will as surely destroy them as he did the disobedient Israelites. We will as surely miss heaven as they missed Canaan, if we prove disobedient to God as they did. Paul calls their action an example of disobedience (Heb. 4: 11), while here Jude lays it to unbelief. The unbelief of Jude resulted in the disobedience of Paul.

Angels that kept not their own principality. Principality denotes rank or office. They were not satisfied with the rank God had given them. They *left their proper habitation*, or place of exercising their office, or work God gave them. It seems that the devil and his angels were lifted up with pride and aspired to higher offices. (1 Tim. 3: 6.) If this is true they were guilty both of pride and rebellion against the authority of God.

Kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment. Not only disobedient human beings are punished for their sins, but even angels, a higher order of creation, were punished. Peter reasons that since God spared not the angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, he will not spare us if we live in sin. (2 Pet. 2: 4.) Some think this is not said of all the angels who fell, for evil spirits occupied human bodies in the time of Jesus. However this was only for a while and would not affect the truth of this statement. Others think this is not said of the angels who fell with Satan through pride, but of a group who left their habitation to consort with the daughters of men. (Gen. 6: 1-4.) But this idea is not well founded. (Pulpit Commentary.) Just where they are kept, how closely they are confined, and what is the darkness mentioned, are things not clearly revealed. The judgment of the great day refers to that day

when all nations will be gathered before him (Matt. 25), and the disobedient will be sent away to a place prepared for the devil and his angels. Jude uses this as a warning to all who would entertain the idea of sinning against God.

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah . . . given themselves over to fornication.

This is the third example of punishment for sin. Read Gen. 19 and 2 Pet. 2: 6-8 for about all we know about the sin of these people. They gave themselves over to fornication, and went after *strange flesh*. The word strange denotes that which is contrary to nature, so in their whoredom they committed acts contrary to nature; hence the sin of Sodomy.

Set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. God has not left us without warning as to the consequence of our sins. But in spite of such plain statements many people think God is too good and kind to punish people forever. Jude says these men of Sodom are suffering the punishment of eternal lire, and they are used as an example to warn us. So we conclude that if we live in sin, we will suffer the same punishment.

III. Identifying the Guilty (Jude 8-15)

These also defile the flesh. The enemies of the truth against whom Jude wrote were sinners like those of Sodom. Their doctrines led to defilement of the flesh by encouraging people to think they were not responsible for what the body does.

Set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities. These terms well describe the spirit of our time. People generally despise dominion; they do not like to bow to authority. Social groups, labor unions, even nations pay no attention to age-old standards of right and respectability. There are people in the church who have no respect for the authority of the elders. This is the spirit of rebellion which characterized these men of whom Jude writes. To *rail* is to use harsh, insolent, vituperative language. The word *dignities* refers to men holding offices which entitle them to respect. It is possible for men in such offices to act in such way as to forfeit their right to respect, but Jude writes of

such as are worthy, and condemns such as rail at worthy dignitaries.

Michael . . . durst not bring railing accusation against the devil. When the angel disputed over the body of Moses we have no way of knowing. Macknight supposes by the body of Moses is meant the Jewish church and state, but for this he gives no authority. The meaning Jude intends for us is obvious—that if an angel railed not at the devil, we should not rail at them in high positions of church or state. It is not becoming in Christians to rail at high government officials.

They went in the way of Cain . . . Balaam . . . Korah. Cain introduced human inventions into the worship of God, and his offering was rejected. (Gen. 4; Heb. 11: 4; 1 John 3: 10-12.) To go in the way of Cain is to pervert the worship of God with human inventions, such as incense, instruments of music, etc. The *error of Balaam* was to compromise the truth for the love of money (Num. 22ff;

2 Pet. 2: 15), and to give counsel and aid to the enemy of God's people. (Num. 31: 16.) Titus was warned of men who teach destructive doctrines for the love of money. (Titus 1: 9-11.) The *gainsaying of Korah* refers to the harsh criticism he made of Moses, and his desire to rule, and then his rebellion against the authority of Moses. (Num. 16.) When he rebelled against Moses, God said it was rebellion against the Lord. When people rebel against regularly ordained (appointed) elders, they are in rebellion against God. And when the people complained about the punishment of Korah, the Lord put them to death; hence we learn that we are not to criticize the disciplinary actions of the church in harmony with God's word.

These are they who are *hidden rocks*, which ruin souls as hidden rocks wreck ships. They are shep-

herds that without fear feed themselves instead of feeding the flock; they serve themselves. They are *clouds without water*, being of no value to anybody. They are autumn trees without fruit, hence of no value. By saying *autumn* trees without fruit, Jude intends to suggest that there would not be time for them to bear fruit; that time had passed. They were *twice dead* and *plucked up*, that is, dead through two seasons and hence hopelessly dead; plucked up and so no chance ever to bear fruit. They were as restless and unstable as *wild waves of the sea*. And as waves wash up the filth of the sea on the coast, so these brought out their shameful teachings and practices. They were like *wandering stars* in that they were not fixed and dependable; they were vacillating, compromising, time-serving. And for all such characters, then and now, the blackness of darkness has been reserved forever. As wandering stars, shooting stars, are soon enveloped in darkness, so these men are to spend eternity in blackness of darkness.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied. Whether the prophecy of Enoch was oral or written we do not know. Some object to the inspiration of this epistle because Jude quotes uninspired works. But no one objects to Paul quoting heathen poets. (Acts 17: 28; Titus 1: 12.)

To *execute judgment upon all, and convict all*. The order of mention is the reverse of their actual happening. All will be convicted by his coming, and the execution of judgment will follow and will be prolonged forever. They justify themselves in various ways for their ungodliness, but when the Lord comes with his hosts of angels, their pretenses will vanish. They will suffer for their opposition to the Lord. In that day all will wish they had served him instead of satisfying their own lusts and desires.

Topics for Discussion

1. Sin and corruption in the church are no accident; the devil intends to bring them in. His workers creep in privily; they seldom work openly. For this reason elders especially must be on guard to protect the church from harm. Strife in the church is bad, but fighting to throw the devil

out is honorable and scriptural fighting.

2. None get too high and great for God to punish, for he punished angels. None are so little and unknown that he will overlook them in the multitude, for all the people of Israel

who sinned died in the wilderness. There is no escape for great or small.

3. Cain, Balaam, and Korah are examples of what we should not be. It is good to study such characters. We can profit from such study as

well as we can from studying those characters who were what we should be. God has shown us both sides, and has warned us against being like the wicked, and encouraged us to be like the righteous.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

How was Jude related to James? To Jesus?

What do you know of the theory which makes Jude a cousin of Jesus?

What evidence do we have that Jude was not an apostle?

What did the early "fathers" say of this epistle of Jude?

What reasons are suggested for its late acceptance as inspired?

Why should this give us confidence in the list of books we now have as inspired?

Golden Text Explained

What lesson do we learn from the Israelites on apostasy?

What warning does Paul give us based on their experiences?

What do we learn about apostasy from the Laodiceans? From Simon?

How do we know that these Laodiceans and Simon were children of God?

Name and discuss three classes of people who need to take heed lest they fall.

Name and discuss four things to do to keep from falling.

Purpose of Epistle

In what disposition of mind did Jude write this epistle?

Why is our salvation called the common salvation?

What is the meaning of faith as used here? Give other examples.

What is meant by the word contend? Give examples of others contending for the truth.

Would debating with false teachers be included in contending for the faith?

What is suggested by the fact that this faith was once for all delivered?

Why the importance of holding the form of sound words to keep the faith pure?

How do the enemies of truth seek to turn men from the truth?

How do they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness?

Examples of Punishment

Prove the possibility of apostasy by the sin and destruction of the Israelites?

What is the principalship which angels kept not? What was their sin?

What is said of their punishment? What do you think it means?

Is the punishment of angels any proof that God will punish human beings?

What is the sin of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah?

What have you learned from Genesis about the destruction of these cities?

Of what are these cities an example? To whom are they examples?

What is the lesson Jude intended for us to get from these three examples?

Identifying the Guilty

Of what sin did Jude accuse the enemies of the gospel in his day?

What is meant by setting at nought dominion? Give an illustration.

What is meant by railing at dignities? Give an illustration.

Of what does Jude give the angel Michael for an example?

Over what did Michael and the devil have a dispute?

What is meant by the way of Cain? Give an illustration.

What is the error of Balaam? What do you know of this Old Testament character?

How did he help the enemies of God's people to destroy many of the Israelites?

What is meant by the gainsaying of Korah? What do you know of this incident?

What is meant by hidden rocks? Clouds without water? Autumn trees? Twice dead and plucked up? Wild waves of the sea, and wandering stars?

Who was the seventh man from Adam? What use did Jude make of him?

When will all be convicted of the truth? What will happen to the wicked?

What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?