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Home Department Magazine

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LIST OF LESSONS

FOR

FIRST QUARTER, 1916

January 2—THE ASCENDING LORD.

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 1: 1-14.

MOTTO TEXT—

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January 9—THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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MOTTO TEXT—"Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2: 21.)

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MOTTO TEXT—"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Rom. 8: 14.)

January 30—THE LAME MAN LEAPS.

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MOTTO TEXT—"Love one another from the heart fervently." (1 Peter 1: 22.)

February 27—THE SEVEN HELPERS.

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MOTTO TEXT—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6: 2.)

March 5—THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 7: 1-6: 2.

MOTTO TEXT—"He thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life." (Rev. 2: 10.)

March 12—SERMONS WITH MARTYRS OF BARTH.

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MOTTO TEXT—"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." (Heb. 12: 1, 2.)

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MOTTO TEXT—"Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8: 30.)

March 26—THE OWN GOD AND OWN WORLD (Special Missionary Lesson).

LESSON PASSAGE, Exodus 20: 9-6; Romans 1: 15-25; Ps. 2: 3; Ephesians 1: 10-21.

MOTTO TEXT—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20: 2.)

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Christianity's Message to Fathers.

WM. LUNSFORD, D.D.

CHRISTIANITY has a distinct message to fathers about their children. It has no such message to mothers. The word of the Great Apostle to fathers is this: "Fathers . . . bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The author is talking to fathers about their children, and lays on them in specific terms, not only the duty of providing for their children, but the additional, solemn responsibility of religiously educating and training them.

Nowhere does God transfer that responsibility by word or implication, to the shoulders of the mother. Not that the mother is to be free of any such task. The very fact that she is mother makes the obligation a binding one on both, with responsibility attaching first to the father.

It has been well said, that the mainstay of the family life is the father. He can throw off that divinely imposed task if he chooses, but not without great loss to himself and his family. No man has a right to assume the position as the head of the family, and then undertake to avoid or transfer the duties which belong to that position. And one of the threatening points in our modern civilization is the father's lack of a keen sense of responsibility in the education and training of his children.

It is no small thing for a man to take upon himself the obligation of fatherhood.

And the man who can do so lightly or unwisely is either wrong in his head or wrong in his heart. The Bible puts the emphasis on the father as the responsible head of his household.

It is commonly said that in this generation fathers are shirking this duty largely, and leaving it to mothers.

Dr. Louis Albert Banks says that the time was when mothers had but little to do with the government or education of the children of the family.

But as time went on, and boys and girls began to be educated alike, the position of the wife and mother was so improved that she began to stand in her proper place beside the husband and father; then the father began to shirk and get from under his end

of the burden, until in thousands of instances the responsibility of family government has been transferred to the shoulders of the mother. The father says: "I will pay the bills and you must do the rest."

Oh, the ruin that has come to families through the unfaithfulness of fathers in their duty to their children. Note the instances of Eli and his boys; of David and Absalom. Think of the instances that have come under your own observation, of boys who have gone to ruin by following in the footsteps of fathers who were frivolous and thoughtless in the matter of religiously training their children.

1. Let fathers remember that providing for the family does not end their obligations.

God himself has said that the father must train his child religiously.

It isn't enough that his boy goes to the Bible school, or even to church. It is the father's duty to set that boy an example by going himself, and taking his child with him.

The first lessons and the first impressions are the ones that last. How true is it that each man is largely what his childhood has made him. Each man is in heart and mind what his parents have made him. Oh the pity of it, he cannot destroy that past. He cannot uproot the habits and thought and feelings which he received from his father!

"I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly fashioned it one day,
And as my fingers pressed it still,
It moved and yielded to my will.

"I came again when days were past;
The bit of clay was hard at last;
The form I gave it still it bore,
But I could change that form no more.

"I took a piece of living clay,
And gently formed it day by day;
And molded it with power and art—
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

"I came again when years were gone;
He was a man I looked upon;
He still that early impress wore,
And I could change him never more."

The father himself must be God's man.

He cannot train his child unless he is. I am not simply thinking now of one who subscribes to a creed, and who is orthodox in his thinking. Not one simply who claims church membership, and who uses the language of heaven; but of that almost rare type of the father, who responds to Jesus Christ and his church and who punctually and faithfully stands ready to take upon himself any task that falls to the Christian's lot.

The boy, seeing that, will be molded, and influenced by it, and in most instances will follow on.

We hear very much more of the mother's influence in holding the child to the true path of life, than of the father's. That is why so many men trace their first religious awakenings and desires back to their mothers. Where the father is alike concerned, the inspiration of his memory if any thing is greater than that of the mother's.

George Stuart says, "At the conclusion of a sermon in Nashville, a man came to me and laid his hand on my shoulder, and said, 'Brother Stuart, how your sermon today carried me back home, especially to memories of my father, who was the best man I ever saw. He is gone to heaven now. We have a large family left, and mother is still at home, and I should like to see all the children gather once more at the old home, and have you go out and hold a little service with us and rededicate that old home to God, and give all of us children a chance to do the same thing while mother lives. If you will come with me, I will gather all the family together next Friday for that purpose.' I consented to go. The old home was but a short distance from Nashville.

"The brothers and sisters came, and the brother took me out where all the children had gathered. As I drove in sight of the place, the brothers were standing in the yard, whistling and talking. Did you ever stand in

the yard of the old home after an absence of many years, and entertain memories brought up by every benten path, and tree, and gate, and building about the place? These brothers were all members of the church except one—the youngest boy. The old mother was indescribably happy. There was a smile lingering about the wrinkles of the dear old face. We all gathered in the room with mother in her old chair in the corner. The brother who had arranged the meeting and carried me to the place brought a Bible and laid it in my lap, and told me to do as I pleased. I replied, 'Let's have an old-fashioned experience meeting. I want each child to tell his religious experience.' The eldest arose and pointing his finger to the portrait of the father hanging on the wall, said, 'Brother Stuart, there is a picture of as good a father as God ever gave to any family. At every turn of my life since leaving home, I have felt the pressure of his hand on my head. I have not been as good a man as I should have been, but I stand up here today to tell you and my brothers and sisters, and my dear old mother, that from this day on till I die, I am going to live a better life.'

"And so said they all, till they came to the youngest brother. His face was buried in his hands and at first he refused to speak, but arose finally, and holding the back of the chair and looking up at me, he said, 'Brother Stuart, I am the only black sheep in this flock. Every step I have wandered away from God and the life of my precious father. Today I come back to God, back to my father's life, and shall endeavor never to wander away.' There was a bit of sobbing, and I started that old hymn, 'Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound that Saved a Wretch Like Me.'

"As I wandered away from that old home I said, 'It is the salt of a good life that saves the children. A boy never forgets the fact that he had a good father.'

How Can I Help?

JAMES ELMER RUSSELL.

MANY a member of the Home Department asks this question. They have so many home duties, or they are shut in by weakness or sickness, and they wonder how they can be of help.

Let me suggest certain ways of helping which are open to practically every member of the Home Department.

For one thing, it is impossible to live a true Christian life in any community with-

out proving a benediction. When a man or a woman, day by day, reveals the spirit of Christ, even if the circle of those whom they directly touch is small, they are helping more than they can ever know. Through them at least a few learn that Christ is real and that the Christian religion is something very wonderful.

We can help others by being patient with them. People may not do just what we would

like to have them do. They may try our patience terribly, but we shall help them if we do not fly into a temper, but exercise rather a splendid self-control. Even at our best we try the patience of others. We are human. And as we expect others to be patient with us, and Christ to be patient with us, we must be patient with others.

Even if we have been injured we shall help by maintaining a spirit of willingness to forgive. It never helps to try to get even with another. We are all wondering how peace will come to distracted Europe, but in the meantime we can be peacemakers by seeing that as far as we are concerned all friction is removed from our relationships with others.

Few yet realize how much cheer they can scatter by writing letters. Let the shut-in members of the Home Department keep in mind the other lonely ones in the community and occasionally write or send them a word of good cheer. When you find something which helps you, pass it on to others.

But there is still a way in which we can help others, perhaps the most important way of all, and that is by bearing them upon our

hearts when we pray. I shall not attempt to explain how it is that when a true Christian prays for another that other is helped, but it is a fact. The teachings of Jesus prove this, and Christian experience proves it. Every member of the Home Department can bring spiritual influences into the lives of anyone in the community just by praying for them. Some man is going astray, some woman is in sorrow, some child is in great moral danger; you can pray for them, not as a last resort, but as a first resort. Of course, others may resist the spiritual influences which God brings into their lives when we pray. They can resist for they are free. But is it not a great thing to know that as you lift your heart in prayer for someone who is, it may be, on the other side of the world, a divine influence for good comes into that one's life, which would not have gone there if you had not prayed?

When every other means of helping seems exhausted, let the Home Department member be sure, as Tennyson finely suggests, that more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

The Unselfishness of Grief.

CARRIE MAY ASHTON.

We see and hear a great deal about the selfishness of grief, all of which is very noticeable and true, but there is another beautiful side, seldom spoken of.

A fine woman who is bravely carrying a life-long sorrow in the loss of her husband, who was one of the biggest, sweetest and kindest souls that ever walked life's path way, is not brooding over her sorrow, is not shutting herself away from her friends and dear ones, is not wearing mourning garments, but is going about as if her loved one was here on earth with her, and as courageously as he would have her.

A beautiful young mother who has lately lost her second little daughter, is a perfect wonder to her family and friends. Only the dark circles under her eyes and the pathetic lines about her mouth, tell of what she has gone through. She wears no sombre black, telling of her loss, she never rails at the inevitable, and bemoans her faith. She simply accepts life's lessons bravely and sweetly and performs her daily duties as if nothing had happened.

The venerable parents and the sisters of a fine, promising young man whose untimely death was a shock to the community, filled the house with flowers and bravely took up

their load, fulfilling in every possible way, the slightest expressed wish of their absent member who had simply gone before. It was their only son and brother who had died as he had lived, a brave soldier on life's battlefield, and he it was who had asked them to wear no black, to have no mourning at his funeral, only rejoicing, and never to shut themselves up in gloom and despair away from their friends and others who might need them, and so they who loved and desired to follow his request, filled the house with flowers he loved, and wore the simple white gowns at the last brief services, after which they went about their daily duties as if nothing had happened.

An accomplished and delightful woman who is at the head of the music department of a large educational institution, lately lost her mother through an accident. In a very short time she returned to her duties, bringing with her her father, a well preserved elderly man.

Not only did she take up her regular work, but within a very short time she gave according to schedule, a most enjoyable recital which had been previously arranged for.

Her bravery and courage and good cheer, as well as her devotion to her father, are a marvel to her associates and friends.

She goes about as usual to church, concerts and to see her friends.

Her very atmosphere preaches a sermon on the unselfishness of grief, for all who know her realize the strong and beautiful tie which existed between herself and mother.

Another woman, lately widowed, is just as brave and natural as if nothing had happened, and is in a measure, losing sight of her own grief in the service for others.

That we of the twentieth century are growing, progressing and broadening, is very evident when we notice the change in funeral customs and observances in the last twenty, ten and even five years.

Only now and then do we see some woman who feels it her duty to visit the cemetery every week or even month, to pay proper respect to her dead.

How much finer and more beautiful is the tribute paid by doing something for the living that is really needed.

Instead of a pilgrimage to a grave, which only brings sadness, one woman on the birth-days of her dearly loved mother, always strives to take or send flowers to some shut-in friend. Perhaps some discouraged soul

needs a cheery visit, a new magazine or book, some fruit or jelly, or better still, a drive to get the cobwebs out of her brain.

Grief is no longer wholly selfish as in days of yore. We of this century are not only carrying our own burdens the best we know how, but we are striving to brace our neighbor and also tide him over with his.

Who shall say that in reaching out a helping hand to some other soul, we are losing sight of our own sorrow?

The custom of sending a vast amount of flowers to the cemetery to wither and die, is slowly but surely dying out, and in its place has come a saner, more normal, unselfish method.

More often they are now sent to the hospitals and homes for the aged and children, where they are generously distributed and furnish brightness and cheer to the sick, infirm and lonely.

There is still plenty of opportunity for growth and progress along these lines.

How much sweeter, and better and more helpful to live in the present and for the living than to constantly mourn and sorrow over the inevitable and the past.

Success at Spout Spring.

GEO. BRAXTON TAYLOR.

For the encouragement of many a weak church this story is told. It is not a fancy picture, but a true tale. The names of the people have been changed, and the exact locality of Spout Spring will not be known to all, but in other respects this account does not vary from the facts. It has often been said that "what man has done, man can do;" this sketch illustrates rather that "what woman has done, woman can do."

Not many years ago, upon her marriage, Mrs. Alice True came to live at Spout Spring, her husband being the railroad operator there. A few years before, when she was just a girl, she had been baptized at her old home church, where she became a leader in the Sunbeam Society and enthusiastic in her support of her church and her pastor. Her smile and warm heart and bright face made it easy for everybody to like her, and her quick Irish sense of fun and humor, helped her to have the good-natured word for all, and to see the best side of things, even when others saw nothing but discouragement. Before leaving her father's home, she had learned from her father to manage the telegraph office and to send and receive messages, so when she came to Spout Spring, a small office, she was able to be of great help

to her husband. Baptists were few at Spout Spring when Mrs. True arrived. The main church there was Methodist, but that was a mile away from the village, and the Presbyterian church was even farther away. Back from Spout Spring, a mile or so, were quite a number of Baptists, holding their membership at churches four and five miles distant; this meant that in the winter, when the roads were bad, they often went two months, or even longer, without attending religious services at their own churches. There soon burned in Mrs. True's heart a longing to have at Spout Spring a Baptist church, but save to her husband to her dear friend and fellow-Baptist, Mrs. Wright, she did not breathe her hope.

The Methodist women had a good missionary and aid society, and into this organization Mrs. True and Mrs. Wright entered in all sincerity and good fellowship. They were present at every meeting, paying their dues and helping at every point. When it was proposed that a quilt should be made, no one was more enthusiastic over the matter than these two Baptist women, and when the squares were brought in, each Methodist had one square, but Mrs. True and Mrs. Wright each had nine. This surprised and delighted

all the society. It was at this meeting that the suggestion about building a Baptist church at Spout Spring was first mentioned. Mrs. True had not planned to speak of it at this time, or at any time in the near future, but how true it is that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"? The Methodist pastor was present, for a few moments, at this meeting of the society, and the eighteen squares brought by the Baptist women called forth from him most cordial praise. Almost before she knew it, Mrs. True had said to him: "And how much are you going to give us when we go to build a Baptist church at Spout Spring?" To the honor and credit of this preacher be it recorded that at once he answered, "Five dollars." No such thought was in his mind, but not a few who heard his promise, thought that it would be a long time before he would have to pay this five dollars.

Mrs. True went home and told her husband what had taken place and declared that she believed that it was time to start to raising money for a Baptist meeting-house. Mr. True, though he loved his wife and was a good Baptist, was disposed to throw cold water on the scheme of building a Baptist church house at Spout Spring. But the purpose had been born in Mrs. True's heart, never to die. She found in Mrs. Wright a kindred spirit, and so it came to pass that this small and self-appointed *building committee* had frequent meetings. These meetings were so enthusiastic that it was not long before the two husbands were most wide-awake honorary members of the committee. Little by little the proposition that there should be a Baptist church at Spout Spring had its place as a subject of conversation whenever the people of the neighborhood gathered socially. Before long the prospect for a Baptist meeting-house at the Spout was made much brighter when it was announced that a beautiful building lot for the church had been given. Baptist meeting-house stock immediately went up many points. The Baptists out in the country around Spout began to be interested in the plan and hope of the two faithful and zealous women.

The *building committee* were likewise a self-appointed "ways and means committee," and many were the hours that they thought and thought as to how the money needed could ever be raised. The Fourth of July drew near and the two women decided to try a lawn party, on that day, for the church fund. They consulted with the men. The men said that it was an impossible plan, and that the money could never be raised. But the women insisted. At last the men proposed that the success or failure of the lawn

party should settle, once for all, the matter of the new church. The women accepted the proposal, if the supper failed in the supper they would give up the plan for a church. But how the mere suggestion of failure nerved the hearts and the hands of these earnest women! *They would not fail.* How they worked. Women who have had a share in church fairs and festivals will know what these vallant souls did. The Spout neighborhood, while not rich, is made up of well-to-do folks, and folks that are social in their instincts. A lawn party in that section, for the benefit of a church, means far more than ice cream and cake and lemonade. It means a good meat supper, and perchance other things that will amuse, in an innocent way, the young folks.

The long-looked-for day came. All was in readiness. The people arrived in crowds. The little group of women on whose hearts the great undertaking mainly rested was no longer only two; it was still a small band, but how brave and dauntless they were. Nor did the Baptist women work alone; they had the hearty cooperation of their Methodist sisters. Just as the lawn party was at the very climax, a black cloud threatened to ruin the whole affair. The men advised bringing everything into the house, and they said the cloud meant complete failure to the undertaking. Mrs. True was sure that the cloud would pass by. How did she know? Was she praying that it would? Well, she was right; it did pass. The evening was not broken up, nor did the people get caught in the rain when, at a late hour, they went home. Never were women so tired as Mrs. True and Mrs. Wright. They went to bed, were sick for a week and had to have the doctor. But they could not stay down long when they knew that all the bills, for ice and other things, had been paid, and that the net sum made by the supper was \$108.00. This settled the question as to the church; henceforth no one asked whether the church would be built, but only *when* it would be built. A year passed by and another Fourth of July arrived. In this year, in many ways, the women had been able to add to their \$108.00. Now they said that there was to be another Fourth of July supper. The men protested, especially Mr. Wright and Mr. True, but it was of no avail; the women had set their minds to the work. The second supper was scarcely less full of labor for the faithful few, and was even more successful; this time the net proceeds were \$112.00. Was not this glorious?

Now, the men, who had, to this time, held off, thinking that the plan would never go through, began to give. None were able to

give large sums, but many gave liberally. Letters to many friends far and near brought in many dollars, and, like a snowball, the building fund grew. The next important move was when the women decided to give one-tenth of all their income. Nor could all the husbands hold back from this praiseworthy departure. Now it was very much in order to discuss such questions as to how big the new meeting-house should be, and its shape and so on. Nothing succeeds like success and fortune favors the brave. About this time the railroad sent to Spout Spring a large force of men to straighten and raise and double track the line. It was eleven months before this work was done. And before these men left, many a dollar had gone from their pockets to the treasury of the new meeting-house. Fortunately there was no bar room at Spout Spring, and dimes that in some places might have gone for drinks were spent for the little things, good to eat, that the Baptist women ever had on hand. And in the process of time the meeting-house was finished. Mrs. True and Mrs. Wright could scarcely realize that it was so. Now they arranged for the dedication day. They set it

on a fifth Sunday, so that all the churches of the country around could attend, without breaking in upon their preaching days. The little Baptist circle counted themselves fortunate when they secured for the presiding of the dedication sermon the state secretary of Sunday school work. He was a good preacher and knew also how to raise money. In no way did he disappoint the people; the sermon was tender and strong and as to the collection, when the day was over, the debt of \$500 was provided for. How happy everybody was that day!

When the church had been constituted and the meeting-house finished, the next thing was to call a pastor. Let this part of the story be brief. The little church has her pastor. They share his services with two neighboring churches. Small and weak as they are, they have him one whole Sunday in the month and for a night service on another Sunday. Although there are only thirty members in the little church, since *all of them* give, and most of them one-tenth of their income, no wonder that they pay their pastor \$200.00 a year. All success to the Spout Spring Baptist church!

Co-Operating With One's Children.

LUCY G. WHITWELL.

I HAVE a friend in a suburban town who is a marvel to all her friends and acquaintances in the amount of work she accomplishes, the amount of reading she manages to do, the church and club work she is interested in, and, most of all, the way she manages her children. She frankly acknowledges that she begins very early to teach the children to help themselves and each other. There are five, ranging in ages from four to eleven, and even the youngest has some simple tasks for which she is responsible. The mother says each must help or she would never accomplish anything. Perhaps a few lines from a letter written to me just after the holidays may prove helpful to some other mother:

"Since the first of the month Marian, too, is going to school. That makes five lunches to pack, four for the children and one for their father. Of course, that means much baking. Frances (aged eight) bakes nearly every afternoon. When I start to get supper she gets out her materials and without a word from me bakes cup cakes, either plain or cocoa. I tell you, she is a great help to me, as are all the children. The boys pick up and sweep, help make beds and do lots of

things usually considered 'girls' work.' Did I tell you that Charles (aged ten), with the aid of the bread mixer, makes the bread on Saturdays? All I do is to dissolve the yeast and put the dough into the bread pans. This also is a great help. Of course, that is one of the advantages of living alone, as we do I believe I am more to the children than if I lived in the city.

When I visited my cousin in the city the Monday after Christmas, both she and her neighbor said that during the week of vacation they had seen their boys (only a year older than my Bernhard, who is eleven) at meal times and bed times only. I could honestly say that my boys had been away from me only when on errands or at Sunday school. Of course, they had spoken to other boys, but had not played with them. I had baked German "pepper-nuts" one day, while cookies in various shapes another day, made red and green chains and cardboard stars and bells and decorated the house, in all of which occupations they had helped. My cousin had done none of these things, so you see it is not so much where you live as how much you let the children into your life."

Good Morning, Little Mary Marsh.

SUSAN HUBBARD MARTIN

EVER since she had come away, she had wanted to go back. Being the daughter of a minister, there had been many churches and many memories of them. But—somehow—there had been no church, or no memories such as this had been. Her mother, a quiet, brown-eyed gentlewoman, had been in good health during this pastorate. She had sung in the choir, taught in Sunday school and helped in the missionary society. It had been before her fatal ailment had laid hold upon her. The churches that had come after were always associated in the child's mind with illnesses and sick rooms, and watching, for in them mother had never been well or active. This church was the only one she could remember in which mother had taken part. Although many years had passed, she could close her eyes and see her mother standing in the choir of the old church and singing, always singing. Her father, too, had been at his best there. She remembered her father as he had looked when preaching in that pulpit. She could not recall him so clearly anywhere else. Ever since she had left it she had wanted to go back.

When Uncle John sent her the money to make him a visit, the opportunity came. It was Effie the practical who spoke:

"You can make the trip in two days, mother," she had said. "There are no stop-overs, and before you know it, you will be at your journey's end. I think a brown traveling suit will be best and—yes, a black hat. You can wear that with anything." But her words met with no response. She turned her eyes and found mother with her eyes dreamy and a smile on her face.

"Mother," she cried, reproachfully. "You're not listening to a word I say. I've been planning for your trip."

Mother suddenly lifted her eyes. "I've been planning for myself, dear," she replied, gently. "There is one thing I am going to do."

"What is it?" demanded Gladys, who was plump and blue-eyed and charming.

"If I go to Uncle John's," went on mother, slowly. "It will take me within two hundred miles of a little church of which my father was once pastor. I've always wanted to see it again—always. But there was never any money with which I could make the trip. Like all other families, we have had our share of expenses and there was always something needed, and so I've never gone back

I'm getting old, and you children are grown up, and yet I've never seen the little church since the day I left it."

"But mother!" cried Effie. "Why in the world do you want to go back to see that old church? You left it when you were a little girl. Everybody you used to know has probably moved away or is dead. You'll find things so different that there will be no pleasure in them. Now, take my advice: get on your sleeper and go straight through."

But it was Gladys who interposed. "She sent Effie a warning glance.

"Let mother go, if she wants to," she said. "I've heard her talk about that church ever since I can remember. Of course, she wants to see it again. Suppose she does find changes, it will do her good anyway."

And so in the end mother had her way.

She walked up the steps to the church that morning with a beating heart. There was the old elm tree she remembered, larger and more beautiful than ever. How many, many years since she had seen that tree! Yonder was where her father had once stood to have his pleasure taken as pastor of that church. There was the door through which so many, many Sunday mornings, in her little white dress, mother had led her. She wondered—she wondered, if any one would remember little Mary Marsh, the minister's daughter. Of course, no one would. Who would associate little Mary Marsh with the gray-haired woman she was now?

She opened the door quietly and went in. Once inside she looked about. There were the same old pews, the same pulpit with the big Bible on it. There was the corner for the choir, partitioned off by the same green curtains. There were the same windows, back there was the same primary room. It seemed to her as she stood there, that time had rolled back and that father must come into the pulpit as he used to do and that mother would take her place in the choir. She brushed away her tears. After all—had it not been a foolish trip? Mother and father were both gone and could not come back, and here she was a gray-haired woman who had gone two hundred miles out of her way to go back to a place where no one would recognize her. Had not Effie been right? She took a seat, the pews were filling with strange people she did not know. A man went up into the pulpit, the choir gathered in their places. No

one—not a single soul—knew who she was. And yet—how could she expect it? Who would connect the rosy-cheeked little girl with her father and mother years ago, with the gray-haired woman she was now?

Just then more people gathered in. A white-haired old man came down the aisle, leaning on his cane. His faded eyes were still keen, his face tranquil and benignant. An old, a very old man. He saw her sitting in the pew in her sober suit, her gray hair showing under the black hat, her hands folded in her lap, her eyes full of tears. He looked at her and stopped. His eyes lingered on her face as if trying to recall something. Then, all at once, a look passed over his features, a look that lighted it and made it sweeter and more salutalike than ever. He leaned forward and laid his hands on her shoulder.

"Good morning, little Mary Marsh," he said. "And so you've come back to see the old church? I thought you would. I knew I'd find you sitting here in the old pew some day."

The little woman in the brown suit, too, knew him. Who of us ever forget the kindnesses shown to us in childhood?

"Deacon Roy," she cried; "you used to bring me apples and grapes from the farm, didn't you?" She caught the wrinkled hand and pressed it.

"How good, how blessed, it is to see you again; and to think you knew me!" She paused. "I believe it would have broken my heart, if you hadn't," she went on. "I know I've been away a long while, but one does not like to feel one is quite forgotten. You see, there has always been, deep down in my heart, a longing to see the old church, to look again upon the place where father and mother did the best work of their lives." Her voice broke a little. "You know mother did not live long after we left this church, and father was never quite himself after that. The happiest recollections of my childhood have always been centered about this church, one cannot wonder that I wanted to come back. But I've been so busy and I've had my children to bring up, and there never came the time when I could, but last month my old uncle sent for me to make him a visit. By going two hundred miles out of my way, I could visit this old church, and I did. My oldest daughter tried to persuade me out of it. She said no one would know me, but—"

with a happy smile—"I can tell her when I go back that she was mistaken. It seems to me that the years haven't left much of the little girl Mary who used to sit in these same pews, but you knew me!" The sweet voice trembled and broke.

The old deacon looked at her. "I see a good bit of the child Mary still," he answered, quietly. "I see her clear, beautiful eyes and her sweet smile. I can catch the same fine expression when she speaks, and there is still the dimple in the chin that I remember. Yes, there is quite enough left of her to be recognized. I've always wanted to see you; I've stayed by the old church in all its changes. I'm an old man, one cannot blame me if sometimes I am homesick for the faces I used to see. I've tried to be a friend, too, to all its pastors, but I think I can say with no disloyalty to them, that never was there a minister's wife like your mother, never was a pastor so close to me as was your father. I rejoice that before I go to meet them, my old eyes have been gladdened by a sight of the little child Mary I used to know. I've waited a long, long time."

The little woman in the brown suit smiled sweetly.

"Yes, Deacon Roy, you've waited a long time, and so have I, but it is all right now; I can go back satisfied."

"Well, mother," said Effie, the practical, when mother was safely home again. "I know you found that visit to the old church where your father preached when you were a little girl, a great disappointment. You may as well admit it. No one knew you, of course? It is a great mistake, going back to these old places under such changed conditions. Don't you think you were foolish?"

Mother looked up. "I hardly think so," she replied, quietly. "What do you think, an old deacon said to me, when he saw me sitting in the pew?"

"I am sure I don't know," replied Effie.

"He said," cried mother with a note of triumph, as well as happiness, in her voice; "he said, 'Good morning, little Mary Marsh'—just as if it were but yesterday since I bade him good-bye."

Effie stared. "Someone knew you after all, then," she said.

Mother nodded. "Yes," she replied, "some one knew me after all."

There was a silence. Mother folded her work-worn hands in her lap and fell to dreaming.

She saw again the quiet little church with the pulpit and the same big Bible on it. She saw the corner of the choir where mother used to sing. She saw herself a rosy-cheeked child going happily through the church door and holding fast to mother's hand. Oh, those years! The years that could never be lived again, and yet how good God had been. He had given her the opportunity to go back and

see it again. Life might be hard and difficult, but she was better fortified to bear all things since he had been granted the desire of her heart.

She looked up at Effie, this little mother, and there were tears in her eyes.

"I always told you I wanted to go back," she said, tremulously.

The Home Department Lady.

BY HER EX-PASTOR.

FIRST of all, she is real—just as real as you or I. She is genuine, wholly so. This is no make-believe tale, but, as the little folks would say, a "really truly."

She came to the little suburban church from a large one down in the heart of the city. There she had been both energetic and efficient in various forms of church work, and she brought all her consecrated talents with her. When she transferred her membership to the younger and smaller church she did it with the keenest sense of sacrifice. The severing of old associations, that carried with it denials of many sorts, made it all exceedingly painful. She did it for the satisfaction of a sense of duty, masterful and un-mistaken, and she did it when the action separated her in church activities from family as well as from bosom friends.

Her struggle in reaching the decision to make this step she did not advertise. After she had calmly viewed the whole situation she acted with joyous deliberation. And she speedily made the little church feel that she had brought, not only her letter, but her life also.

She was at once taken at her real valuation, and put to work. Be it clearly understood, of course, that she was willing to wear any sort of yoke that the church might see fit to put upon her; and she was soon variously adorned with these insignia of service. In a short while she was superintendent out, and teacher in, the Beginners Department, and superintendent of both the Cradle Roll and the Home Department. And all this is true while she is so frail and delicate that it would seem almost impossible for a vigorous March wind to get by without toppling her over.

While this little woman has been successful in everything that she has attempted, her Home Department experience has been phenomenal. It is to that phase of her work that many eyes have been drawn.

Her field of labor has been in an addition to the city where hills and valleys, and rocks and roots are distressingly numerous, while sidewalks and paved streets are almost totally lacking. Over these hills and through these hollows, over the rocks and along the

ridges, she has gone her way rejoicing. More than that, she has left many, many other hearts rejoicing after she has passed by. Hearts by the score have been cheered by her bright presence, and a new interest in things religious has been aroused in lives that had long been indifferent.

In a remarkably short time the enrollment of the Home Department exceeded by many the enrollment of the church. Indefatigably she has dragged her weak body, seemingly so unequal to the strain that has been put upon it, into every place where she thought her presence was needed. Against the great obstacle of continual physical weakness her indomitable spirit has driven her constantly forward. She has carried the entire burden of the Home Department alone, while never neglecting other church activities. It is likely that she has made more calls in the interest of the church than have been made by the pastor and the rest of the church combined. She has been instrumental in bringing more people into the various church services, by personal effort, than can be placed to the credit of pastor and people together. She has given the pastor more helpful information about the sick, the distressed, the newcomers, the visitors, and so on, than he has received from all other sources combined.

It must be said to her credit that she does not ride a hobby. She is as deeply concerned about the progress of the work of the B. Y. P. U., for instance, in which she holds no office, as she is in the development of her Home Department. Nor is the preaching service neglected because her strength and nerves are taxed to the limit of endurance in the Sunday school. As a well-poised church member, she is loyal to the point of intensity to every individual interest. As a matter of fact, it is to be doubted if she can possibly look with disinterestedness on anything that is of real concern to her church.

It would seem almost brutal to mention money in this connection. Of course, this is all done gratuitously, and, further, her private purse is always open in the interest of her work.

Now, all this may sound extravagant to an outsider—extravagant to an unpardonable de-

gree—but it is given to you as the quiet, deliberate statement of one who has had the best opportunity to observe and appreciate the quiet, modest, devoted life and labors of this consecrated little woman. Without hesitation I assert that, in the vital things of church life—in spirituality and energetic

righteousness—she is as nearly indispensable to her church as any mere mortal could well be.

Without ostentation, quietly, patiently, lovingly, she is daily offering her living sacrifice. And the fruits of her labor time's measure can never, never hold.

The Habit of Being Unfortunate.

ANNE GUILBERT MAHON.

"I'm the most unfortunate boy!" wailed a seven-year-old, coming in from school and greeting his mother, who was in the parlor entertaining a caller. "I lost one of my mittens coming home from school, and I tore my spelling paper so the teacher said I had to write my words all over. I am an unfortunate boy!"

"Oh, no, dear, not unfortunate," responded his mother, quickly; "I'm afraid you were a little careless about losing the mittens and tearing the paper, weren't you? It wasn't that you were unfortunate so much as that you were not just careful enough."

She drew him gently to her and smiled into his rueful little face.

"You are not an unfortunate boy," she added, earnestly. "You are a very fortunate one. Think of the pleasant ride you had to school in Mr. Grey's car, and the big red apple Mrs. Grey gave you to eat at recess, and think what a beautiful day it is, and you will have a whole long, happy afternoon to play in and enjoy yourself! You are a very fortunate little boy—only a little careless sometimes, but you're going to overcome that."

She kissed him and he ran out to play, with quite a different expression on his face.

The mother turned to her caller. "I want to nip any such habit as that in the bud," she explained, smilingly.

"Habit?" inquired the visitor.

"Yes," responded her hostess, "the habit of considering oneself unfortunate. I've seen so much of that in my life and seen how it handicaps and how discontented it makes them. I don't want any of my children to grow up with such a false mental impression."

"I knew a man once," she continued, "whose birthday happened to be on the thirteenth of the month. All through his life he never ceased to call himself 'unlucky.' He did have bad luck, of course, but I don't know that it was any worse than other people

have at times. Adverse circumstances, trials and failure come to all of us sometime. He dwelt on each adverse occurrence and made the most of it, glossing over his real blessings and the 'good luck' which came to him. He did not make the success he should have of his life, for he was always on the lookout for his bad luck, and, of course, he found it, and made the most of it whenever he did.

"Then, I knew a woman who was always saying she was 'born lucky.' Good things did seem to come her way most amazingly, but I believe, looking back at it all now, that they were only blessings such as come into everyone's life, only she was on the lookout for them. She appreciated them and made the utmost of them.

"It all depends on how you look at things, what view you take of life. I think there is such a thing as a child getting into the habit of thinking he is unfortunate or fortunate, 'unlucky' or 'lucky.' He doesn't stop to reason things out when he is little, so I consider it the mother's duty to make him face every thing that comes with the right spirit, never to consider himself an unfortunate, ill-used person because mishaps and hardships come to him. Life is so much what we ourselves make it, you know. Our happiness or unhappiness is due so largely to our mental attitude, and I don't want any of my children to grow up with false impressions. That is why I talked so to Bobby. I want him to realize that he is as happy, as fortunate, as anyone, but that hard things come to every one, and they have to be met with bravery and cheerfulness."

"It never occurred to me," responded the visitor, thoughtfully, "but I can see where you are right. I know people, myself, who consider themselves very unfortunate and unlucky, yet I don't believe they are one bit more so than others."

"It's just a habit," smiled Bobby's mother, "that is why I try to nip it in the bud with my children when they are little."

The Backyard Daisies.

"I bought some large and beautiful flowers for the living-room before my guests arrived," said the young hostess. "I thought I had nothing in the garden handsome enough. But I could not afford flowers for the guest-room, so I had to deck it with my modest little backyard daisies."

"What was my chagrin, when I entered the living-room, to see that the huge, brilliant flowers detracted from the coloring of everything in the room. Even the paintings on the wall seemed to retire modestly into the background before the artificially perfumed beauties. But upstairs in the guest-room, the little back-yard flowers that I had scorned made an island of sweetness and rest, and gave just the needed touch of color to the worn furnishings."

Sometimes we become too discontented with our talents because they are not like those of brilliant folks. If we could sing or play or recite like G— or D—; if we could write like K—; if we could even think of funny things to say in company, like M—;—thus we minimize the value of the gentle voice, the ability to write the kind or say the sympathetic word, or stand the long day's work cheerfully.

Remember the backyard daisies, and take courage.—*Exchange.*

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Forgive Us.

FORGIVE us if this day we have done or said anything to increase the pain of the world. Pardon the unkind word, the impatient gesture, the hard and selfish deed, the failure to show sympathy and kindly help where we had the opportunity but missed it; enable us to live that we may daily do something to lessen the tide of human sorrow, and add to the sum of human happiness.—*L. H. Meyer.*

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Balm By the Way.

The old woman and the child were walking along the country way, and the little bare foot had been hurt by a thorn. The small traveler limped and fretted, and the grandmother comforted and promised:

"Don't cry, dear. Just a little way on and we'll come to something that will stop the smart. Granny knows where it grows."

It was such a homely little picture of life! The roughness of the road does wound. There are hurts and griefs along the way, but always, a little farther on, is balm to stop

the smart. We think the pleasantness of the journey is all over, the disappointment has crippled, the loss stings, and we must halt wearily. But God's plants of healing are always near. Some new hope, love or light waits just a little farther on. We have only to go forward bravely, and we shall not be left comfortless.—*Exchange.*

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Encouraging the Minister.

"AUNT MYRA" took her hands from the dishwater, wiped them on her apron, and gave her visitor a chair. Her husband had gone to a neighbor's and while they waited for him to come back, she talked about her home, the school, and the church she attended, two miles away.

"It's hard to get there sometimes," she said, "but I manage to go almost every Sunday. Sometimes it rains, and I think I can't, but generally a little clearing spell comes just before church time, and we get in between showers. And sometimes it gets hot. Only last Sunday I thought I couldn't go. It was sultry, and the morning's work was hard, and by church time I was tired out. But I went to the sink and pumped a big basin of cold water, and I washed my face and I rolled up my sleeves and washed my arms, and I splashed the cold water over my wrists, and I felt a lot better. And when I looked in the glass, my face wasn't so red as you might expect. So I thought I'd go, after all."

"Well, when my husband saw me getting ready, he washed, too, and put on his clean clothes, and I said, 'I declare, you look real nice!' and he said, 'Well, come to think of it, you look real nice, too.' Of course, he's partial, but it does a body good to hear it said, anyway."

"It seems as if our minister always knew just what I needed, and I thought the sermon last Sunday was meant for me. It was practical, and gave you lots of comfort, too. You know the kind of sermon I mean, don't you?"

"When church was out, and I was standing in the vestibule, waiting for my husband to bring the buggy round, the minister came out, and what do you think he said to me?"

"He said, 'Mrs. Radford, I want to tell you how much you encourage me. Preaching in the summer is hard work. So many people go away, so many find it easy to stay at home, church work reaches a low ebb. But every Sunday, rain or shine, I know you and your husband will be here. I know how hard you work; and when I see you sitting there,

revelent and prayerful and attentive, you are a real help and inspiration, and I want to tell you so.

"Well, sir, I didn't know what to say. I stood there looking foolish, I guess. But wasn't it good of him to say that? I knew all the time my going to church was doing me good, but who'd have thought that I was encouraging the minister?"—*Exchange*.

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"Lo, I Am With You Alway."

A busy woman entered her room hastily as twilight shades were falling—went directly to her desk, turned on the gas and began to write. Page after page she wrote. The solitude became oppressive. She wheeled her chair around, and with a shock of joyful surprise looked squarely into the face of her dearest friend, lying on the lounge at her side. "Why, I didn't know you were here!" she said. "Why didn't you speak to me?" "Because you were so busy. You didn't speak to me." So with Jesus—here all the time. The room is full of him, always ready to greet us with a smile—but we are so busy. But when the solitude grows oppressive we suddenly turn, and, lo! he is at our side. We speak to him and he speaks to us, and the soul's deepest yearnings are satisfied.—*Selected*.

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Never Mind the Last Step.

LITTLE JACK was in the country visiting his grandfather. One day he came into the barn to search for his grandfather, and the old man, who was up in the haymow, heard him calling. "Grandpa, I want to come up where you are."

"All right, climb up the ladder."

It was dark in the barn and the little fellow lifted a troubled face towards the dim loft. "Grandpa, I can't see the top step."

"Put your foot on the round where you are, Jack, and climb up. The top step is here, and you will see it when you get to it."

We cannot see the end of the beginning. We can see just one step ahead. It is best for us to live each day as it comes, without worrying about the last step. Jesus knows where the last step is, and if we trust him he will give us light to see it when we get to it.—*Exchange*.

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GOD often delays his help. He carries over he comes long enough to bring us to the end of ourselves and to show the futility of looking for creature aid.—*Rev. F. B. Meyer*.

Something Always Ahead.

IN the helpful little book, "A Pilgrim of the Infinite," is told a beautiful story of courage. A crippled boy was sitting in his wheeled chair on a ferryboat, when a sympathetic lady passed by. Her heart ached for him and she said to her friend: "Poor fellow! What has he to look forward to?"

The cripple overheard her, and turning his head, said pleasantly, "Wings, some day."

That is enough to make some of us fretful people ashamed of ourselves. We are so impressed with the ailments we have, that we cannot look forward to wings. An old saint was asked what was, to him, the best word in the Bible, and he replied, "There remaineth, therefore." He lived in the joy of the things that remain somewhere ahead, waiting for his coming. When people tell us to live in the present, we must agree to what they mean, but we must never let them make us think the present is half as fine as the future is sure to be. Wings, some day!—*Exchange*.

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My Prayer.

Oh, keep me sweet, I pray!
Despite the toils and trials of the day,
Despite the petty cares, the countings mean,
Despite the baffled hopes, the dull routine,
Still let the soul, serene, pursue her way
Oh, keep me sweet, I pray!

Oh, keep me sweet, I pray!
Despite the lips that kiss but to betray,
Despite the unfavorable front of fate austere,
Despite the lengthening shadow of the bier,
Still let the soul unsoured wear love's array
Oh, keep me sweet, I pray!

Susie M. Best, in *New Guide*

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Part Or All.

"I KNEW, of course, that father and mother had more experience in life than I have had," confessed the girl in the easy chair to her dearest girl friend. "But at the same time I was just determined to try that position that offered so much more salary. They feared the work was too much for me, from the first. But even when I found it out for myself, I wouldn't let them know, and give up—until I collapsed; and here I am, paying dearly for my foolish self-confidence." Her pale face and thin hands told the tale of long illness.

That is the trouble with some of us spiritually. We know that the Lord knows what

is best for us; but we insist upon just trying some foolish, cherished plan of our own instead of his wise one. We give him part of our love and obedience and service. We trust him in part—and ourselves for the other part. It is only too often that it takes the wreck of our own plans to teach us to trust him in all and not in part, to "trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Yet that is the way to true service and efficiency and to far greater happiness than any of our own selfish plans and desires could ever win.—*Exchange*.

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Walking With God.

As I go on, not knowing:
I would not if I might!
I would rather walk in the dark with God
Than walk alone in the light;
I would rather walk with him by faith
Than walk alone by sight. —*Ann*.

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Be At Peace.

DO NOT look forward to what may happen tomorrow; the same everlasting Father who cares for you today, will care for you tomorrow, and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering, or he will give you un-failing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and indignations.—*St. Francis de Sales*.

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HAPPINESS is made up of small things, the little simple pleasures of life, the sweetness and comfort of every day. We can accept them and be glad, or we can crush them under our feet, and go on our discontented way vainly looking for some great happening that shall suddenly flood life to overflowing with delight and transform all its rough places into beauty. Happiness is like heaven—it must be built out of daily living, if ever it is possessed at all.—*Selected*.

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Down the road a little way
We shall find it.
All the sorrows of the day,
All the burdens, drop away,
And the lights eternal play
Just behind it.
Since that portal lies so near—
Home's dear portal with its cheer—
Though winds blow and skies be drear,
Never mind it. —*Selected*.

"Little Endings."

"Tik pretty and sincere signature to all her letters is, 'Yours to serve,'" says a recent article about a woman who is world-famous. "It is as if she has taken those words in their literal meaning for the motto of her life. For there is nothing in the way of helpfulness that one may not ask of her; no homely service that she is not pleased and glad to render."

To an uncanny degree we all unconsciously enclose little *real-self* scraps in the letters we write. "If you need me, call me!" is the way a well-known journalist ends letters to her friends. And the simple words express just what she is as a woman; a strong, true, unemonstrative soul, but faithful always to the highest laws of friendship, and right there when a hand goes forth to find her. She is that rare treasure, a non-exacting friend, ready with her service, ready with her steadfast love, readiest of all with an understanding that can always see the why of things, even of short letters and of long, unexplained silences.

"Faithfully yours," written in a strong, masculine hand once called forth trust in a doubting heart. Business of vast moment had been placed in the man's hands, and fear had crept in, whispering that it had been unwise to choose him, an almost perfect stranger. Then came a short, typewritten business note, with the above words at the end. And they very literally told a true story, of a strong, honest soul, that would prove faithful to every trust.

One of the world's greatest philosophers and writers signs all his letters, "With every best wish." And to those who know him the words mean just what they say, for he never sends out anything but his very best.

"Tenderly yours," is the way a beautiful woman, who is seventy years young, closes her letters. And the quaint ending always comes to tired, busy people, out in the tolling, hustling world, like a breath of fragrance from a bunch of violets accompanied by a vision of a fair, sensitive face in whose gentle blue eyes the very spirit of motherhood seems to dwell.

"The best to you, always," is the way a young girl closes her letters. The all-embracing sentence remains with one for many days, for the five short words bring the real desire of a singularly pure, true, and sincere heart.

What we regard as the trivial closing sentence of a letter very often opens wide a door revealing to others our real character. For the so-called "little endings" linger in the heart long after the mind has forgotten the contents of the letters.—*Exchange*.

International Sunday School Lessons.

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

LESSON I.

JANUARY 2, 1916.

The Ascending Lord.

MOTTO TEXT.—

"When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,

And gave gifts unto men." (Eph. 4: 8.)

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 1: 1-14.

MEMORY VERSES, 10, 11.

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Lesson Text.

1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophili, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

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Continued Activity of Jesus.

Titus is a daringly great thought of Luke's. He has gone from us, in his human manifestation, but not to rest from his labors. His work in the vast enterprise of redemption has not ceased. Sitting on his throne, he is no merely interested beholder, but still the vital agent, the inspirer, the energizer, the guide of the fortunes of his kingdom on earth. In his former volume Luke had written to his friend of the earthly life of Jesus, of what he had begun to do and teach; in this second volume he writes to the same friend of what Jesus continued to do and teach after his ascension. It is a bold conception, a sublime truth, full of comfort to his servants of all the ages. His hand is still on the helm, his blessed presence is everywhere in the hearts of his people. The Acts of the Apostles, then, are really the acts of Jesus in Luke's view. Himself is the divine agent, and they are the

instruments of his will. The former volume's record extends over thirty-three years; this second covers the thirty years immediately following, and breaks off abruptly. It tells the story of the Master's establishment of his church, and his successes in missionary extension of his gospel. The record breaks, but the mighty Christ goes on conquering and to conquer. His activities have filled all the succeeding centuries, and will never cease until he presents a redeemed world to the Father. "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work." He asks you and me to be his co-workers.

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His Kingdom.

That was the one central theme of his teaching, the one supreme end of his labors. God's will done on earth as in heaven, a race won to righteousness, sin and disobedience abolished. Not only saving individuals to go to heaven, but the making of a heaven on earth. Let thy kingdom come, and the whole world be filled with the glory of God. The Son of man which is in heaven, now, and here. It is heaven where the Christ spirit is. This was Jesus' idea of the kingdom. Not individuals only, but mankind brought into harmony with the will of God; a new heaven and a new earth. Let this vast purpose of our Lord sink into our minds. How pitifully small and weak is the disciples' conception in comparison! Wilt thou at this time restore the political kingdom to Israel? It was an infantile question. The patient Master waves it aside, and waits for fuller comprehension. They will understand later. How shall his kingdom come? By submission to the eternal laws of love, service and sacrifice. Forty days after resurrection he diligently explained to his servants the nature of the kingdom, and the laws under which it should triumph.

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His Command.

Tarry in Jerusalem. It was a dangerous place. Enmity and hostility still flamed in the city. Naturally they would have departed speedily, but for the Master's order. After the loving benediction, the tender parting and the comforting angelic assurance, they bravely abode in the city. Why? What end is to be served? It looks useless and reckless. They were bewildered, but yet under the spell of a power stronger than prudence or fear. That absent Lord held their heartstrings in his hands. He spoke of a Comforter that should come, and of a mighty work to perform. He said that we need power. He commands that we be his

witnesses to the world, that we shall declare the good news of his kingdom to all the sons of men. We loved and obeyed him present; we will love and obey him absent. It was not a listless idle waiting. They met in that sacred upper room for prayer. Much had they to recall of that wonderful man of Nazareth. How great he was in deed, how wise in speech, how precious in companionship and love. What fervency in prayer in those meetings; what radiance of hope.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Ascending Lord. Acts 1: 1-14.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"Ye shall receive power."

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a reality that is too large for definition. Vagueness and mystery clothe it about. It is known only in its results. By some means a man's mind is brought to fuller understanding of the man, Jesus; a larger comprehension of his gospel; a profounder impression of the meaning of his cross; a keener sense of man's moral ruin; to an intenser faith in and personal devotion to the Saviour. This is to be spiritualized, emboldened, consecrated. This is a sign of the baptism of the Spirit. This is the qualification the disciples needed. For that they were to wait and pray. You and I need power. We must get it in the same old way.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Ascension Foretold. John 20: 11-18.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"I ascend to my Father."

Jesus had plainly told his disciples that it was expedient for him to go away. They were wholly unable to understand why. The Lord knew when his earthly work was done, he would continue it in the heavens. It was as though he regarded his human presence a bar to their deeper knowledge of himself and the great doctrine of the kingdom of God. His visible presence removed, they would more easily dismiss their narrow notions of the kingdom, and rise to the apprehension of his spiritual character and mission. If I go not away the Comforter will not come. His first act in the heavenly sphere will be the pouring out of the Spirit.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Ascension of Elijah. 2 Kings 2: 9-14.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"He took the mantle of Elijah."

The great prophet knew the time of his departure was at hand. His clinging disciple Elisha would not turn back from following. Let a double portion of thy spirit fall on me, was a noble prayer. Not twice as much of the Spirit as Elijah had, but only a large and liberal portion of it. Suddenly the old man was borne away, and his mantle dropped at the young man's feet. That was the sign of answered prayer. From that hour he became the leading pastor of Israel, and lived to a good old age, teaching the people and soothing their sorrows. Fortunate if your boys take as their model one of the noblest citizens of the country.

THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. Ascend into Zion. Psalm 24: 1-10.

THURSDAY'S VERSE. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?"

That is, who shall be an acceptable worshiper in God's house? It is a pertinent question always, what kind of a person is pleasing to God, in the solemn acts of prayer and praise? One who lives right. One whose soul is pure and his conduct just. His hands are clean, he abhors a lie. He is free from egotism and pride. You can't be spiritual in a moment. The pew and the pulpit have no magical power to transform us into saints. To be spiritual in the church we must be spiritual in the daily life. Spirituality is a height to which you cannot fly in a minute. You must live in that climate. Church services are dull to many. Why?

FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. Gifts from the Ascended Lord. Eph. 4: 7-16.

FRIDAY'S VERSE. "He gave gifts unto men."

See Paul's view of the continuing activity of Christ on his throne. The care of his cause and people are forever on his mind and heart. He still exercises all authority and power. Never does he put the reins in the hands of even his best servants. Always is he giving gifts. Prophets and apostles, pastors and evangelists. These, baptized in

the Spirit, are precious and invaluable. They are designed for the perfecting of his saints. His instruments, whom he holds to a strict accountability. You see how Paul's view accords with the view of Luke that Jesus still works. The salvation of this whole world is his changeless aim.

SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. The Glorified Christ. Rev. 22: 8-16.

SATURDAY'S VERSE. "I am the bright and morning star."

That is, Jesus is the promise of that glorious time when the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings for all the children of men. There is a power in his gospel and in the ministry of the Spirit which ensures the final victory of God on the earth. The morning star symbolizes that glorious consummation. The great Head of the church will become the Saviour of all men on earth some sweet day. It is to be by the power of his cross. What did he mean when he prayed: "Father, glorify me with the glory I had with thee before the world was?" It was the glory of the lamb slain. Love, service, sacrifice is his glory.

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. The Lamb on Mount Zion. Rev. 14: 1-7.

SUNDAY'S VERSE. "Fear God and give glory to him."

The book of Revelation was written in a time of tribulation. Cruellest persecution threatened the very life of Christianity. But this bold confident writer's faith trembled not. He was certain that the life and heart of God was in the great movement. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "Be of good cheer," said he to his fellow sufferers. God reigns, Jesus is on the throne. His kingdom meets the deepest needs of human hearts. It cannot be defeated. This everlasting gospel shall be preached to all nations, kindreds and tongues. God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Be of good courage.



JANUARY 9, 1916.

LESSON 2.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit.

MOTTO TEXT.—"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3: 16.)

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 2: 1-13.

MEMORY VERSES, 3, 4.

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Lesson Text.

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Æthiopes, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia.

10 Phrygians, and Pamphylians, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

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The Fact.

The prayer meetings began in the early morning hour. Pentecost came seven weeks after the passover. It was the tenth morning

after the ascension. Obedient waiting and fervent prayer was the role of the disciples. One hundred and twenty were in the upper room. They were not passively waiting like a bread-line before an unopened door. It was rather a time of intense meditation and passionate longing. Active thought and holy expectation was their tribute of honor to the ascended Lord. The Spirit is not sent to listless, uninterested souls. With one accord, one heart and one mind they were in one place. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Spirit to them that ask him? Suddenly a sound filled the room, as of a mighty rushing wind. Then tongues, as of fire, stood on the heads of all. The solemn mystery of the Spirit is upon them, a new enlightenment is in their minds, a heavenly rapture in their souls, and a divine courage in their hearts. Old narrow, worldly conceptions of Jesus fall from them, and they see him in his spiritual glory. He shall take the things of mine and show them unto you, he shall guide you into all truth. The dispensation of the Comforter has begun. Now they are qualified to be witnesses indeed. This is the doing of the Master. His human instruments are now ready for their work.

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Preaching Begins.

The multitude in Jerusalem had heard the strange sound, and they came rushing to find out what it could mean. Men were in the city from all the known nations of the world, come to attend the feast of Pentecost. A congregation, representing every kindred and tribe, was gathered by the providence of God. The time had come for bearing witness. That company of one hundred and twenty, crowned each with a tongue of fire, symbol of a preaching function, descended into the street. Sublimely bold and confident, they mixed among the throngs of men, and told them about Jesus. They did not argue. They did not teach. They did not discuss the reasonableness, the consistency and values of Christian doctrine. They simply told the facts that they knew. They bore personal witness to the man Christ Jesus. We knew him, we heard him, we loved him. We saw him dead, we saw him alive again. We talked and ate with him after the resurrection; we saw him

ascend into heaven. Personal experience was the sure ground of the Pentecostal preaching. Not what they thought and reasoned, but what they knew. That was power then, it is power now. What has he done for you? What do you know of the personal Christ? How has he touched and blessed your own life? There may be no visible flame on your head, but the fire of God ought to burn in your heart. Do you say anything to your children, your husband, your wife or your neighbor about your Saviour? Alas, for the silent Christian!

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The Congregation.

Men from all the world heard the testimony. It was the prophecy of a gospel preached to every creature in his own tongue. The people were astonished and held spell-bound. How is it that these plain Galileans have power to speak to us of the triumphs of God in our own language? What can it mean? It was no comfortable hour for the enemies and murderers of Jesus. They were soon on the ground. This wholly unlooked-for revival in interest in the Nazarene angered them. How shall they check and neutralize the excitement? "Why," said they, "we can explain the whole affair. These ignorant men are drunk. They gabble and jabber; they know not what. Be ashamed of yourselves for listening to such drivelling nonsense."

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Coming of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2: 1-13.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"They began to speak with other tongues."

Jesus speaks of four symbols of the Holy Spirit: Wind, fire, water, oil. Wind is an invisible force, so is the breath of the Spirit. Fire is a purifying force, so is the warmth of the Spirit. Water is a cleansing force, so is the renewing Spirit. Oil is a health giving invigorating force, so is the girding power of the Spirit. These material emblems are designed to help us in our efforts to grasp something of the infinite mystery of the action of the divine on the human spirit. To Jesus was given the Spirit without measure, not for purifying or cleansing, but for wisdom and power. The Spirit's work for us is to magnify him as Lord, Saviour and Friend.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Promise of the Spirit. Joel 2: 23-29.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

The prophets were the men who held the nation to its religious aim. They were not interested so much in ritual and sacrificial observances as in holding the people loyal to the high spiritual mission of Israel to the whole world. That great thought was in Abraham's brain; to it he consecrated himself and his descendants. Joel will not let his generation forget it. God will use us as a light to lighten the Gentiles, and one day he will universalize our spiritual wealth. Abraham's faith will be justified, and his hope realized. God's Spirit will be given to all men. Pentecost was the fulfillment of Israel's ancient hopes and prophecies.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Spiritual Refreshing. Isa. 44: 1-8.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"My blessing upon thine offspring."

Spiritual conceptions are never easily attained. The ancient Jews were peculiarly unresponsive of pure religious ideals, because of their ignorance, and the prevalence of idolatry. A vast mass of illiteracy is hard to be lifted up to enlightenment. The prophets appealed to the people on the ground of material advantage. "Be obedient to God," said they, "and he will give you good crops and increase your herds. But these did not stop on this low level. They constantly impressed the lesson of the values of inward comfort and peace. God's best blessing is in aiding us to be like himself in righteousness and holiness.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Office of the Spirit. John 16: 7-15.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"He will convict the world."

This is the indwelling Spirit, the Spirit living in and beautifying Christian lives. Don't fancy him doing his work on the unconverted, independent of and outside of you. He indwells you to make of you a witness for the Christ-life. Live inconsistently, and the Spirit's work on unbelievers is enfeebled. Live nobly, and his argument with sinners cannot be resisted. Face your responsibility. The Spirit must get at the world through you. Your obedient Christian living will convict men of the danger of sin, the beauty of righteousness, and the certainty of judgment to come. This is a startling thought, but it is true. Let us think of it.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Ever Present Spirit. Psalm 139: 1-12.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"Even the darkness hideth not from thee."

Here is one of the finest passages in the Old Testament. The impossibility of escaping the all-seeing eye. Not a thought is hidden from him. He reads our secret thoughts as an open book. From his presence there is no escape. He is in the uttermost parts of the earth, the darkness and the light are both alike to him. This is like Paul's saying: "In him we live and move and have our being." It is a most comforting fact if our hearts are set to do his will. It is a disquieting and alarming fact if we are bent on having our own way. Keep the heart pure, walk uprightly, as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Comforter. John 14: 16-26.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"He abideth with you."

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God lives with you and in you. Grieve not your holy companion. Every sin you commit is done in his presence. You can hurt him, but you cannot grieve him away. He is the mother-like presence of God. Mother is the last one ever to give up her child. Christian, go carefully and reverently.

LESSON 3.

JANUARY 16, 1916.

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost.

MOTTO TEXT.—"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2: 21.)

LESSON PASSAGE, ACTS 2: 14-47.

MEMORY VERSES, 38, 39.

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Lesson Text.

22 Ye men of Is'ra-el, hear these words: JESUS of NAZARETH, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having

The word Comforter is misleading. The Spirit comforts and soothes God's children, but he does much more. He is a mighty Helper. He puts courage and hope into the soul; he instructs our ignorance, warns our willfulness, and glids with power in the inner man. Ever he whispers to us: "Onward, onward, fight the good fight, and I will help thee."

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Spiritual Gifts. 1 Cor. 12: 12-31.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"Now ye are the body of Christ."

Here is one of Paul's great thoughts. Everyone in the church is a member of Christ's body. He regards the church as one family, one body, and that is Christ's body. Each one has a gift bestowed by the Spirit, and he is under obligation to use it for the good of the body. The church members at Corinth were quarrelling over their gifts. Each was anxious to show off his own gift to his own selfish advantage. It was a disgrace. Paul's figure of the unity and dependence of the various members is an unforgettable rebuke. Each gift is for the profit of all. Alas, for a church whose members want to rule or ruin! Paul's remedy is love, which he describes in most beautiful fashion.

loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

20 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne:

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

34 For Da'vid is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israhel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jē'sūs, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Pē'tēr and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Pē'tēr said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jē'sūs Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Hō'ly Ghō'st.

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

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

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Peter.

This is the man who, two months ago, swore he did not know Jesus. Isn't it an outrage for him to speak? But this is a new man, Jesus has made him over. Let him take the witness stand. It is the Lord's doing. Jesus is running this meeting. Peter was a coward then; he is a hero now. I will make you a fisher of men. The invisible dominant Christ sets him forward. Is he cool and self-possessed? Never more so. It is his first sermon before a great city audience, and he has had no time to prepare. Has he the orator's power to command attention? Listen and see. Does he recall the Master's words: "It shall be given thee what thou shalt speak?" Hear the witness.

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Introductory.

He repels the sneering charge of drunkenness. It is absurd on its face, because it is only nine o'clock in the morning. Common observation teaches that men do not become drunken so early in the day. The refutation is complete. What is the meaning of this wonderful demonstration? It is none other than the fulfillment of Joel's prediction: "In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy." Men of Israel, what you have heard and seen this morning is not the result of wine, but rather the marvelous doing of the Spirit of God. This is an excellent and impressive beginning. Peter has evident power, and has already won attention. He has cleared the ground; let him go on.

Sermon.

Men of Israel, listen. Is he going to argue or debate? Far from it. He is going to tell what he knows, and what many of the hearers know, a mighty fine method for a preacher. His first point is about Jesus the Nazarene. He was a good man, and God's good pleasure was upon him. You yourselves know the wonderful deeds he wrought, and the loveliness of his character. In all Israel's history there never was so pure and saintly a man. Did you love him? No, you malign'd him and broke his heart. You got wicked men to nail him to the cross; you murdered him. That was a sword's thrust, but they kept still. Peter is telling the facts. There is an awful silence. A murder charge, and not one to resent or deny.

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Witness takes up his second point. God raised this dead Nazarene from the grave. This was foretold by the prophet in a Scripture you all read and believe. It is a fact this crucified Jesus is not dead, but alive. I know it, all my brethren know it. Through forty days after his resurrection we saw and heard him. On the reality of this fact I and my brethren will stake our lives and our hopes. God bless Peter! He is master of the assembly now. How solemnly they hang on his words. He passes to his third point.

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Jesus is not with us now. He has ascended to heaven. Just ten days ago our dear Master led us out to Mount Olivet, and as he put his benediction upon us, his body lifted and a cloud received him out of our sight. Yes, the man you murdered God has raised and set by his right hand. He has received from the Father the long-promised Holy Spirit, and has poured on us what you now see and hear. God has made him both Lord and Christ, this very Jesus whom you have crucified.

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Conclusion.

The sermon cut them to the heart, and they cried out, "Brothers, what are we to do?" The witness had won a verdict. A mass of penitents looked up to him appealingly. What shall we do? Repent, was the instant reply. Turn to God and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was a great sermon, an immense revival began, and that very day three thousand souls were baptized. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.

MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Peter's Sermon at Pentecost. Acts 2: 14-24.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"As ye yourselves also know."

This was not a sermon delivered before an audience, but to an audience. It was not poetically pleasing, but terribly forceful and direct. I think the dainty rhetorical sermon is getting out of date. The people like frank, plain dealing in the pulpit. Peter was not abusive, but was fearless in statement of the facts. He counted on having the conscience of his hearers on his side, and he did. As ye yourselves also know. You treated Jesus wickedly. God has exalted him, and made him Lord and Christ. The contrasts of sin and righteousness are in the sermon, and so of judgment and forgiveness. It pierced like the point of a spear. Great was the maiden effort.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Jesus Supreme. Acts 2: 25-36.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"God hath made him Lord and Christ."

That was the sermon's climax. It fell like a clap of thunder. That crucifixion two months ago was the great crime of Israel. Its enormous guilt the criminals dreamed not. They know not what they do was profoundly true. Peter knew the facts of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension. They fell in the range of his experience. How does he know that God has made him Lord and Christ? Can he prove that to a doubter? Jesus is God's Messiah and Lord of men. Logic can't prove it; it is spiritually discerned. Take the facts that Peter knows, and nothing explains them but the view of his divine supremacy.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Results of Peter's Sermon. Acts 2: 37-47.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"What shall we do?"

You couldn't say they enjoyed the sermon. That was not the preacher's aim. Peter was not entertaining folks that day. An enormous sin has been committed, and you are the men who did it! His testimony proved it. Did they tear him in pieces? No, their own hearts were too much torn. Yes, they were under conviction of sin. Peter, is there anything for us to do? Is there any hope for us? Peter is gentler now than in his delivery of the discourse. He knows the anguish arising from consciousness of sin against Jesus. He felt it just two months ago. Brothers, repent,

confess to God, and acknowledge the Crucified One as your Saviour and Lord. A multitude did it.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—A Searching Discourse. Acts 5: 29-40.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"We must obey God rather than men."

There was the declaration of independence in religion. We take orders from you in civil affairs, but in religion we deny your authority. Jesus Christ is our Master, and him alone will we obey. You murdered him, God raised him, and we glorify him. The rulers were in a rage, and would have torn the apostles in pieces. But Gamal'el calmed their fury, and got their consent to wait and see the movement die out, if it was of men. However, they would give the apostles a lesson. All of them were whipped and dismissed with the charge to preach no more in the name of Jesus. They went away thankful for the honor of suffering for his sake.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Guided by the Spirit. Acts 11: 1-18.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"Arise Peter, slay and eat."

The kingdom grew, and Peter's activity widened. In Joppa he saw a vision, which circumstances immediately interpreted. Men called for him to visit the Gentile, Cornelius, a good man living at Caesarea. As Peter preached Jesus, the Holy Spirit fell on the company. The Gentiles were converted and baptized. When Peter returned to Jerusalem the strict brethren found fault with him for letting Gentiles into the church on the same terms as Jews. They had not yet grasped the facts that the gospel of Jesus levels all distinctions among men; that all men now have immediate access to God on equal terms. Peter explained the Spirit's action, and the objectors held their peace.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Salvation Prophesied. 1 Peter 1: 3-16.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"The grace that should come unto you."

Peter is in old age now, and the ardor of his love for Jesus is unabated. Discipleship to the Master must cost hardship and suffering, but let them be borne cheerfully and bravely. The gain is vastly greater than the loss. Our blessed gospel was the dream and hope of the old prophets. They saw the time

coming when Messiah's glory should break on the world. How eagerly they tried to know more of this mystery of love, which was destined for you. They foresaw that suffering would be one of the results to his followers, but that it was not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed. The gospel is ancient hope realized.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Precious Promises. 2 Peter 1: 1-11.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"Partakers of the divine nature."

LESSON 4.

JANUARY 23, 1916.

The Spirit of Life.

MOTTO TEXT.—"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8: 14.)

LESSON PASSAGE, ROM. 8: 12-30.

MEMORY VERSES, 16, 17.

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Lesson Text.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Ab'ba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. You are to become more and more sharers in the holiness, righteousness and love of God. That is salvation working out to fullness and completeness. Salvation is moral resemblance to Jesus, not merely getting into heaven. The gospel stresses *what* you are, not *where* you are. Conversion is a starting point, sanctification is a process. That is what Peter means when he says: "Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, and to patience godliness." We have not attained. Paul said he had not. Let us work out our salvation which grace has begun.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

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The Spirit.

How many times you have tried to get some definite, satisfying conception of the Spirit. You can't do it. The effort fatigues and confuses the mind. We have to be content with our perfect confidence that the Spirit is. Someone says he is the victim of his own silence. He shall not speak of himself. We have far clearer conceptions of Jesus. He came and dwelt among us. Human eyes saw him, ears heard, and hands handled him. I see Jesus, and I love to think that in him I see the Father and the Spirit. God gives the Spirit, and the exalted Christ gives the Spirit. When the Spirit acts and speaks, God acts and speaks, the Son acts and speaks. Yet there is one God. I can't solve the dilemma. I rest on the Master's words. Philosophy cannot analyze the supreme mystery. Jesus says the Spirit is the president and guide of his church. He is the Spirit of holiness, wisdom and grace. He is the supporter

and nourisher of all that is good in human character; he is the eternal enemy of the flesh, which stands for all the evil inclinations and dispositions of the human heart. He is Christ's representative on earth, God's agent to achieve the triumph of his kingdom.

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His Offices.

We know him best by the things he does. He shall not speak of himself; he shall glorify me. Jesus said, when his work was finished in the world, that his disciples needed the Spirit's presence more than they needed his own. "It is expedient for you that I go away." My visible presence would hinder God's work. The disciples found it hard to believe, but it was true. 1. He will bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have spoken to you. 2. He will lead you into all truth. 3. He will show you things to come. 4. He will abide in you forever. In addition to all this, our Saviour said: "I will be with you. I will never leave you." Here is complete identification with the Spirit. He also said: "The Father will come unto you." And here is the identification of the three. The true God dwells in his people. The end in view is that the flesh shall be subjugated and destroyed, and men shall be made partakers of the divine nature. Such is the scheme of amazing grace. God is with us, in us now, to the end that his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. The Spirit delivers us from the bondage of fear, helpeth our infirmities, maketh intercession for us, conforms us to the image of Christ, and will finally make us joint heirs of his glory. What manner of men ought we to be? Let us be careful not to grieve the Spirit. God help us to love one another and so fulfill the law of Christ.

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Our Duties.

We are called to personal purity and active righteousness. Don't fancy your salvation is complete, and sit down lazily expecting to get to heaven when you die. That is a grossly stupid and ignorant view. The Spirit fights the motions of your fleshly nature by setting you to the tasks of energetic holy living. Through you, by his indwelling, he has a mighty work to do on the uncovered world. He will convict it of sin, judgment and righteousness. How? Without you? By independent sovereign acts of power? No, that is not his method. He will do it by you through his indwelling. The Christ that is formed in you, your own shining light, your own natures subdued to truth, righteousness

and love, these are the forces the Spirit works conviction upon. Great are the offices of the Spirit. We must be co-workers with God, and so work out our own salvation.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Spirit of Life. Rom. 8: 12-17.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"We are debtors, not to the flesh."

Faith in Jesus is the death warrant of the flesh, the life of sin. We died unto that form of life when we gave ourselves to Christ. In our baptism the old body of that life was symbolically buried. When we were raised from baptism, we were symbolically raised into a new life in Christ. You professed death to the flesh and sin; you professed a moral resurrection to live to the glory of God in the Spirit. That life, the indwelling Spirit, feeds on the bread of heaven. The Spirit ever points you to Jesus, saying: "There is your model." Fix mind and heart on him. He is the life.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Work of the Spirit. Rom. 8: 18-30.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"Them he also glorified."

That is the final aim of Christ. Not to get us into heaven as a place, but to transform us into the likeness of himself. It is a spiritual condition, rather than a place, into which he plans to enter us. When we are perfected in his image, we will be in heaven, no matter where we are. Do you recall his words: "The Son of man who is in heaven?" He was on earth and in heaven at the same time. Yes, brother, heaven is a state preëminently as well as a place. Set your mind on the state and the place will take care of itself. The gospel contemplates a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Reveals the Truth. 1 Cor. 2: 1-10.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"The Spirit searcheth all things."

Truth and grace came by Jesus Christ. The Spirit takes that truth and expounds it unto men. He makes no new revelations. Jesus is the manifold wisdom of God, the life, the truth, the way. The Spirit administers this treasure to the hungry seeking hearts of God's children. The Spirit leads us to obedience, and in obedience we learn the secrets of

the spiritual life. We can't learn the deep things of God if we have not the mind of Christ. You and I are in the school of Christ, the Spirit is our teacher. Through him alone we win the treasures of wisdom.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Source of Power. Zech. 4: 1-14.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit."

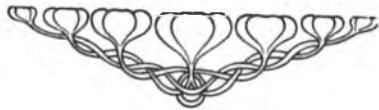
Good men in the far-off time saw the truth. The vision was of a burning lamp, fed from a bowl, which was fed in turn by the oil of two olive trees. The living trees symbolized the Spirit of God. Remove them and the light is extinguished. Take away the Spirit of God and men are impotent to do good. We live out of the heavens. All our help must come from thee. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me, O Lord. If we do anything good in this world, we must be girded in the inner man by the Spirit of power. Man's might of armies and treasures and governments are not our reliance for the world's progress. "Only by my Spirit," saith the Lord.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5: 16-18, 22-23.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"Let us walk in the Spirit."

That is, let our conversation be pure. Don't talk unkindly of your neighbors. Abhor filthy and revolting tales. Keep the heart clean, and hate every envious, selfish thought. Be strictly honest in business; shun evil companions; follow the example of Jesus. Here is the most remarkable contrast in the world's literature. What a horrible catalogue of the fruits of the flesh! We come in touch with them every day. How beautiful and precious the list of the fruits of the Spirit. Look on this picture and that which



shall we choose? The Christian is already committed. God help us to walk after the Spirit.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Hope of the Gentiles. Rom. 15: 8-10.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace."

Such is Paul's closing prayer in his letter to the Roman brethren. He had never seen them, but he felt the closeness of brotherhood in Christ. They are mine by an ownership begotten of the Spirit of God. They have the same faith with me, are born unto the same hope, travel the same road, and give glory unto the same Saviour and Lord. His greatest letter he has addressed to them. The best thoughts of his redeemed intellect he lays at their feet, along with the best love of his heart. His glory is the union of Jews and Gentiles in one vast hope of salvation. All these blessings he ascribes to the power of the Holy Spirit.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Greater Baptism. Matt. 3: 1-12.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

John's baptism consecrated men to repentance and righteousness. Sacred as it is, it cannot take rank with that which a Greater One will bestow. I baptize in a physical element; he will baptize in a spiritual. Mine imparts nothing, being only a symbol of self-dedication to God. His is the impartation of a divine energy and power, enabling you to live the life of true religion. Spirit and fire. The words harmonize in one vast meaning. The Spirit of wisdom and holiness along with flaming zeal and courage. Into that element of truth heroism and love, he will plunge you. In it you will live and achieve and abide forever.

LESSON 5.

JANUARY 30, 1916.

The Lame Man Leaping.

A Miracle.

KEEP in mind that we are studying in the Acts what Jesus was continuing to do. He worked many signs and wonders, through the Spirit, by his apostles in Jerusalem, after Pentecost. Right in the wicked city the number of converts grew daily, and Christ's great victory was won on the spot where he suffered. The rulers remained quiet for months, possibly a year, taking no note of what Jesus was doing. They were positively sure he was dead, and that the movement in the city was merely the fanaticism of his ignorant deluded followers. Let them alone, the folly will soon pass. So they ignored what the Lord was doing. They had dreaded the Nazarene, but for the rabble that attended him they felt contempt. But a miracle was to break this repose. One day at 3 p.m., Peter and John found a beggar at the temple gate. The poor cripple was healed by the power of Jesus, and he filled the court with shouts of delight. He went with the apostles into the temple, leaping and skipping like a happy child, praising God.

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A Sudden Assembly.

This noisy, extravagant demonstration of the healed beggar was like the ringing of a bell for the hour of worship. Ordinarily the coming in of Peter and John would have attracted no particular attention. Everybody knew the lame wretch who had lain at the Beautiful Gate for years soliciting alms. When the crowd heard and saw him clinging to the apostles, they rushed in amazement to inquire into the mystery. It became a natural occasion for Peter to speak, though wholly unexpected and unplanned. It is Christ's doing. He is leading his obedient servants in a way they knew not. The Master is preparing to teach the rulers that his church is absolutely free from their dictation and control. Not the Jewish council, but the Holy Spirit, his representative, is to be its sole guide. The unconscious apostles are being led in a way they know not of. Following the natural suggestion of the moment, the incident becomes in their hands the spring of a great issue with the Jerusalem authorities.

MOTTO TEXT.—"Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (Acts 3: 6.)

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 3.

MEMORY VERSES, 9, 10.

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Lesson Text.

1 Now Pē'tēr and Jōhn went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

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

3 Who seeing Pē'tēr and Jōhn about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Pē'tēr, fastening his eyes upon him with Jōhn, said, Look on us.

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

6 Then Pē'tēr said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jē'sus Christ of Nazā-rēth rise up and walk.

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

8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and 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 knew that it was he which 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 the lame man which was healed held Pē'tēr and Jōhn, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Sōlō-mōn's, greatly wondering.

12 ¶ And when Pē'tēr saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Is'rā-el, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

A Sermon.

Moved by the Spirit, Peter explains the miracle. He claims no honor for himself or John. Men of Israel, why do you stare at us? We have not done this deed by any plety or power of our own. This good deed has been done by Jesus of Nazareth. The Spirit will glorify me. Peter, moved by the Spirit, does the same thing. "Yes," says Peter, boldly, "he whom you think is dead, is alive, and he has made this lame man whole." This man Pilate, two months ago wanted to release, but you chose a murderer for clemency instead. You denied him when the heathen Pilate would have set him free. You killed the Prince of Life, but God raised him from the dead. This is the Man who has given strength to the beggar, though as by faith in his name. You note that Peter is not as conciliatory as he was in the Pentecost sermon. But now he becomes gentler. Now I know, brothers, that you acted in ignorance, like your rulers. Repent then, and turn to have your sins blotted out. Many believed, and the number of converts became about five thousand.

The service was interrupted by the coming in of the priests. They were vexed and infuriated at this public and daring preaching of Jesus and the resurrection. Said they, "It is time to call a halt on these fanatics from Galilee; this senseless heresy and superstition must be crushed by the hand of law." Peter and John were arrested and held in prison overnight for trial, as it was now late in the afternoon. The people dispersed.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Lame Man Leaping. Acts 3: 1-10.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"What I have give I thee."

"The poor ye have with you always, and when you will you may do them good." You have things to give. You have an educated mind. Why don't you work in the Sunday school? You have good means. God gave it to you as a power for good. Why do you not give more liberally to the church and to missions? You have leisure. Why do you not spend more time among the poor and needy? You have good social position. Why don't you use it for God and his cause? It is a shame the way some people calling themselves Christians are so hungry to get into the social set, and then become so exclusive and selfish. Let us quit calling ourselves Christians when we so lose the Spirit of Christ.

TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—In the Name of Jesus. Acts 3: 11-20.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"Until the times of restoration of all things."

Jesus is on his throne in heaven until the times of the restoration of all things. This is Peter's grand view of the glorified Christ. He has grasped the Master's kingdom idea at last. It is spiritual. It is not individual, or national, or racial; it is universal, and into it shall come all peoples, kindreds and tribes. This is God's world, and not one thing in it is outside his knowledge and authority. His boundless wisdom and love is round about it like the atmosphere. He has given it into the hands of his Son, with all authority and power. Jesus shall reign until he brings all men into submission to the will of the Father. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Peter sees it. This will be the time of the restoration of all things.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Lame Shall Leap. Isa. 35: 1-10.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"The tongues of the dumb sing."

Great Isaiah sees the glory of the coming of the Lord. Poet that he is, he breaks forth in passionate eloquent description of the golden age that is to be. It is a splendid hope to a discouraged heart-broken prophet. Though his own apostate generation despise his ministry, he has the solace of faith in the final victory of good over evil. His soul finds rapture in the vision of a world redeemed. The darkness shall flee away sometime, and the light of God shall shine undimmed. In our moments of discouragement, when the present looks like utter failure, let us imitate Isaiah. Remember that God cannot fail. Some day things are going to be better. He will bring it to pass.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Testimony of Jesus' Works. Matt. 11: 1-10.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"Show John those things which you hear and see."

John is in prison for his testimony to Jesus. He is discouraged. Things do not go as he expected and hoped. He goes to Jesus with his trouble—a wise thing to do. John knows the promises of the Scripture concerning Messiah's reign. Isaiah's noble imagery in the 35th chapter is familiar to him. Go tell him the facts you see. My ministry is giving human relief, heavenly instruction and joy. He will see the correspondence of these things

with the predictions of the prophets. Servants of God are confirmed in faith and comforted in heart by all tokens of the coming of his kingdom. The beginnings were small, but they had in them the consolations of God. Hope on, hope ever.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Consideration for the Needy. Luke 14: 7-14.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"Call the poor and the blind."

JESUS REVERSES the common methods of society. His spiritual kingdom is revolutionary of social usages. His gospel is the irreconcilable foe to selfishness, which is the central sin of life. We make a feast, have a party, and invite our own set. We are intensely careful about our social position. We think of ourselves. We call those who will return the compliment. That does not please him. The very reason he demands the invitation of the poor is because they cannot repay in kind. Some noble people obey him. How good it is to show kindness to the needy. Really, how often do you do it? Let Jesus have his way with us.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Jesus Heals a Palsied Man. Luke 5: 18-26.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"The power of the Lord was present to heal them."

LESSON 6.

FEBRUARY 6, 1916.

The Boldness of Peter and John.

MOTTO TEXT.—"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Cor. 16: 13.)

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 4: 1-31.

MEMORY VERSES, 12, 13.

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Lesson Text.

8 Then Pê'ter, filled with the Hô'ly Ghôst, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Is'ra-ël,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

God gave to him the Spirit without measure. He did not claim to teach and act in his own name; he acknowledged his mission from God, and ascribed his power to the endowment of the Spirit. Out of his own experience he knew the dependence of his disciples on the gifts of the Spirit of God. Hence his demand that they wait in Jerusalem for the Pentecostal baptism. God's great scheme is to drive sorrow and woe and sin out of this world, and fill it with the Spirit of obedience to his will. That is the soul of Jesus' gospel. The energy behind it is the Spirit; the instruments are men and women like you and me.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Christian Helpfulness. James 5: 13-20.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"Pray, one for another."

This James is said to be brother to Jesus. His epistle has the practical character of the Sermon on the Mount. His idea of church members is that they ought to know when their brethren and sisters are sick. That is a time for sympathy to express itself. It is a time for visits and prayers. In a village church it often happens that a member is sick, and no one seems to hear, and if he does, he takes no pains to make it known. We act as individual units, taking care of ourselves, forgetting the law of Christ. And yet, admitting this, there is a great deal of human kindness in the world. Many Christian hearts respond to the call of human need. God bless all who sympathize and help.

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Is'ra-ël, that by the name of Jê'sûs Christ of Nâz-à-rêth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Pê'ter and Jôhn, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jê'sûs.

14 And beholding the man which 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 done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jê-rû'sâ-lêm; and we cannot deny it.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jê'sûs.

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

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

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

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The Trial.

NEXT morning, early, the Jewish council met. It was a large gathering. Rulers, elders and scribes, the high priest, with all his family, and some ex-high priests were present. The religious authorities are waked up. This Nazarene movement is not nearly so dead as they had been wont to believe. We put this troublesome, erratic Jesus out of the way many months ago. How is it that his ignorant rabble of followers have power to disturb the city at this late hour? The lame man has been healed. This we cannot deny. Two of the fishermen say that Jesus did it, who we know is dead. They still persist in the notorious delusion that he is alive. Yesterday afternoon they filled the temple court with that absurdity, and we hear that many of the common people are being deceived. We have got to take notice of this matter and see that it spreads no farther. Bring the prisoners in, the men who have the audacity to say that we are murderers. Let us see if they will dare to repeat the charge in the face of the council.

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The Defense.

Here come the two men in charge of the police, while a hundred stern, indignant faces turn on them. The prisoners do not seem to be as awed and intimidated as was ex-

pected. You can see contempt and hate in the eyes of the court. The high priest asks: "By what authority; in whose name have you done this?" Never was Peter more calm. The Spirit clothes him with courage and power. The Master said: "Ye shall have power." The prisoner was courteous in recognition of the rulers of Israel. Now is the time when they shall learn that they have no jurisdiction over the church of Jesus Christ. Understand, ye rulers, that this man was made well by the authority and in the name of Jesus Christ, whom you crucified, and whom God raised from the dead. There is no salvation by any other name. The answer was brief, pointed and terrible. The court was astonished. The uncultivated peasants showed the cool decision and fearlessness that they remembered in Jesus. The court saw it, recognized it, and paid them the high, unconscious compliment. The healed man was there, taking his place beside the prisoners. He would stand by his friends.

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Threat With Liberty.

The council was frustrated. They were the accused. The tables were turned and a tremendous indictment was buried in their faces. Gladly would they have avenged the insult, but they were careful. The prisoners were withdrawn until they could confer. They confessed perplexity. They had had trouble and worry enough with this matter. "We cannot deny the fact of healing, for the man is before us. Here is the only thing to do: we will threaten these men and forbid their preaching any more in this Name." It was so agreed, and to the prisoners, returned, the high priest gave the decision. "You are free, but henceforth you are not to speak of Jesus and the resurrection." In going, Peter made the council this significant, immortal speech: "Decide for yourselves whether it is right before God, to obey you rather than God. Certainly we cannot give up speaking of what we have seen and heard." Defiance could go no farther. The council was defeated.

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Return.

There was great joy when the two got back with their brethren. But it was clear to all that a conflict with the rulers was at hand. The peace and prosperity enjoyed since Pentecost are in the gravest danger. The issue plainly is, the humble Christian brotherhood, challenged by the civil and religious aristocracy of Jerusalem. The government against a feebly-organized church; the nation against

Jesus again. The result; what shall it be? Listen to those prayers. Request safety by retreat? No; for courage to stand, for steadfast devotion to Jesus. The place was shaken, and all were filled with the Spirit.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Boldness of Peter and John. Acts 4: 1-12.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"This is the stone which is become the head of the corner."

It was an architectural figure, but simple and full of meaning. The cornerstone gives strength and cohesion to upgoing walls; without it, the building is weak and unsafe. Your house is doomed, your type of religion is tried and rejected. The apostles see it now. Before Pentecost they were unclear on the deep meaning of Christianity. The Spirit has invigorated and illuminated the intellect, enriched and deepened the feelings, and put iron resolution in the will. These men knew what they wanted; they knew it right and good, and with rare moral intrepidity, determined to do it. We may suffer and die, but the cause of Jesus Christ cannot, shall not, perish.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Boldness of Obedience. Acts 4: 13-22.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"We cannot give up speaking."

Christianity was born in love, service, courage and sacrifice. With these virtues it has won its way to the heart of the human race. With these virtues it must still be maintained and spread. This is Jesus' sole equipment and reliance for the conquest of the world for God. What could he do with cowardice in the holy war against moral and spiritual evil? What could he do with servants devoid of love and filled with selfishness? Can he use you and me? Oh, yes; we are members of the church, but in so many cases that signifies just nothing! Let us ask ourselves the question honestly: "Am I a religious coward? Am I selfish?" It is good to examine oneself.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Prayer for Help. Acts 4: 23-31.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"Grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word."

To do so now has become dangerous. The situation is full of peril. Preaching is forbidden by the state, and it has the power and disposition to kill us. No selfishness in this prayer. Lord, give us the martyr spirit. Rather than seal our lips, make us willing to die. We admire and praise the heroism, but does it bring no reproach to our hearts? How often have we evaded burdens and shirked duties, leaving them to our brethren. In God's name, let us not be loafers and stragglers in the church! Your church needs you right now, and you are tempted to tighten your grip on your purse, or to escape some labor. Lord, help us to keep our vows.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Boldness in Preaching. Eph. 6: 10-20.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"Put on the whole armor of God."

These are the inspiring words of one of the bravest of the brave. He, too, had the baptism of the Spirit, and all his great life he wore the divine panoply that he urges on his brethren. Obedient to the heavenly vision from the day of his conversion, possibly no other man ever did as much for the kingdom of God. Helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness, girdle of truth, shield of faith, sandals of the gospel, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. There is the armor for the Christian warfare. The preacher needs it, laymen need it. The same old enemies within and without still contest the field of the world. You are in the battle. Is all your armor on?

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Boldness of Faith. Heb. 11: 33-35.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king."

Daniel and his friends were required to renounce the worship of God, and bow down before the king's golden image. They declined outright to do it. The king has no right to violate our religious convictions. We hold them dearer than life. We will not insult God and turn to idolatry. Well, then, the fiery furnace waits for you. Be it so, our decision is made. We have faith in God. He will allow us to suffer no harm. That is our confidence in him. Faith won the victory, and converted the king. The flames did not hurt them, and not even was the smell of fire on their garments. There is no finer story of courage and the saving power of faith. Lord, increase our faith.

SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Boldness by Confidence. 1 Samuel 17: 39-51.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"He chose him five smooth stones."

David resented the gross offense of the giant, and the cowardice of his people who submitted to it. With fine human courage, trusting in the care of God, he resolved to humble the foe. But reliance on God did not make him forgetful of the importance of using the best methods in the contest. Saul's armor was discarded because it was cumbersome and unfamiliar. He knew his skill with the sling. With that he went into battle and came back with Goliath's head. That was what he expected to do. He was not nervous, but calm and unafraid. His confidence was in God. He was justified in the result.

LESSON 7.

FEBRUARY 13, 1916.

Humbled and Exalted.

MOTTO TEXT.—"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." (2 Cor. 8: 9.)

LESSON PASSAGE. Philippians 2: 1-11.

MEMORY VERSES, 5-7.

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Lesson Text.

1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Mercy Through Boldness. Heb. 4: 9-16.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"Let us hold fast our profession."

Many Hebrew Christians were under sore temptations to give up their faith in Jesus and to return to Judaism. That was the religion, worldly and decayed, that crucified the Lord. But many trials and tribulations came to them on account of accepting the gospel, and so many fair inducements were held out for abandoning it, that there was a real danger of apostasy. The writer of Hebrews lays out his strength to prevent it, in this masterful epistle. He shows the pre-eminence of Jesus in all particulars, and shows the reasonableness of going to him boldly in every time of need.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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Christian Love.

Paul's letter to the Philippians is a message out of the depths of his grateful heart. They sent a brother, with presents, to visit him in the Roman prison. It touched him tenderly, and the response in this letter brims with thankful joy. One who feels increasingly the loneliness of age is peculiarly susceptible to kindness, and such was the apostle. There is pathos in his very gladness. Of all his churches, Corinth gave him most trouble and drew his severest reproof. Philippi gave him most satisfaction and won his happiest letter. The relation between him and them was Christian love, and on that bond he puts the crown of honor. Under its impulse we take interest in each other. It is the death of egotism, of envy, of strife, and all selfishness. Love cannot center on itself, no more than light can turn itself back on the sun. God did not make all

things for his own glory. That old misrepresentation of the Great Love is abandoned now. Love God and your neighbor. The power of Christianity makes a man a new creation and then adjusts him generously to God and to men. Our religion is not individualistic only, but social as well. It does not stop with the urgency of working out your own salvation; but commits you to the task of helping to save all men. God loves the world of men; Christ tasted death for all. You are to be perfect as your Father is perfect; you are to have the mind that was in Christ. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. No; the Christian must love others. To become completely self-centered is to become completely sinful. Let each esteem others better than himself. Don't you see how this kills vanity, wrangling and strife? How shall we murder the peace and usefulness of our church? The same method is by regarding ourselves and despising God's principle of love, service and sacrifice for others. If there is trouble in your church, right there is the source of it.

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The Supreme Model.

Jesus is the expression of a saved life in humanity. One man has lived on earth, the perfect incarnation of God's beauty, holiness and love. There is the standard, the eternal pattern of the human being wholly approved and acceptable to the Father. His unchangeable purpose is that men shall be made conformable to the image of his Son. That alone is the salvation of God. That model was absolutely formed and fashioned by unselfish love. It is the labor of Christian men to rise into the mind of Christ, to get his view of life, his humbleness, his self-devotion for others. That is what Peter means when he says: "There is none other name given among men whereby we can be saved." Paul says the very same thing to the Philippian brethren. This is the unanimous testimony of the New Testament Scriptures. This is the very substance of that heaven to which God invites. Heaven within us is the salvation to which the Lord works; the other heaven will follow of itself. Paul pictures the mind of Christ in the things he did for others.

(1) He surrendered the glory of the Father's presence for us. (2) He humbled himself to the likeness of men for us. (3) He made himself of no reputation and took the form of a servant for us. (4) He became obedient to death on the cross for us. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name. Now it is God's will that we should have the

blessed privilege of bowing in reverence and obedient love at the feet of a glorified Saviour. Let us adore him, honestly confess him Lord, take up our own cross and follow him.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Humbled and Exalted. Phil. 2: 1-11.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"Jesus Christ is Lord."

We gladly think of him as Saviour. I fear too many think of him only as mercifully comforting in trouble and finally taking us from a painful earth into the paradise of God. We must not so limit our view. He is our Lord, one who has a will and purpose concerning us; one who issues commands. He has all authority, is a divine Master. There is a life he demands that we live; there is a spirit which he requires; there is an active obedience which he imperatively lays upon us. It is for the good of our souls that we honor and obey him as Lord. It will be vain to say, Lord, Lord, and do not the things he says. Christianity is practical. He saves by putting us into the manner of his life.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Humility of Abraham. Gen. 18: 22-33.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"O, let not the Lord be angry."

Abraham was the pioneer of piety on earth. To his great personality God gave a mission which was the hope of the human race. He lived grandly apart from sinners, and yet there was none so pitiful and ready to help. He saved Sodom once from its human foes, but against the dangers of her sins he felt himself impotent. Humbly he appealed to God for mercy on the wicked city. He pleaded for the Lord's patience with himself, as he ventured to ask that it be spared on the basis, and for the sake, of ten good citizens. The Lord graciously smiled on him and consented. Interested for other people. The mind of Christ was in the father of the faithful, Noble Abraham.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Humility of Moses. Ex. 3: 1-12.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?"

God heard the cry of Abraham's children in Egypt. Human sorrow always touches the heart of our Father in heaven. In redemption God always lays help on some human brother. He needs co-workers, and he selects

not an angel, but one who can be touched with a feeling of men's infirmities. Moses is the chosen instrument of emancipation. He feels incompetency. The task is too great. How can a lonely shepherd contend with the mighty king? You can always be doubtful of the capacity of a thorough-going, self-confident man. The assurance, "I will go with thee," led Moses to decision, and the house of bondage was broken and the slavery ended.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Humility of Gideon. Judges 6: 11-18.

THURSDAY'S VERSE—"I am the least of my father's house."

Again the children of Abraham are oppressed by cruel foes. The pitiful situation moves the compassions of God. A helper shall arise from among his people. Gideon is a hazy man. The Lord never did call an idle loafer to his aid. The fishermen of Galilee were active with their nets when called to be fishers of men. God wants Gideon to deliver his countrymen. He feels himself unfit for leadership. No truly great soul was ever rid of self-distrust in the face of a mighty enterprise. Humility is part of his qualification. God can use him, and there will be no danger of swelling airs of self-importance. Gideon went and won the victory.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Humility of the Centurion. Matt. 8: 5-13.

FRIDAY'S VERSE—"I am not worthy that thou should'st come under my roof."

The Roman officer had a tender heart, and was much distressed at the illness of his servant. He prayed to Jesus for healing, but did not ask him to come to his house. Why? Said he, "I am not worthy of that honor. Say the word, and I am sure my servant shall live." Jesus was charmed at the lowliness of the man, and amazed at the strength of his faith. It won the most admiring compli-

ment the Master ever spoke. The Lord answered the prayer, and was happy over this foretold of the Gentiles' entrance into the blessings of his kingdom. How can a Christian be proud?

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Humility of Paul. 2 Cor. 12: 1-10.

SATURDAY'S VERSE—"Therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities."

So many were the victories of his labor and the exaltations of his spirit that Paul admits he was in peril of spiritual pride. Some strange sickness fell on him. He became sure that it was incurable. He accepted it as the good pleasure of God. It was something that mortified his pride, and possibly might interfere with his usefulness. Prayer could not remove it, and grace enabled him to convert it into an occasion of joy. With it there was no danger of men's ascribing merit or power to Paul himself. The credit must evidently be given to the invisible Christ. In this I glory. How great that was! Thank God for Paul.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Humility in Prayer. Luke 18: 9-14.

SUNDAY'S VERSE—"God be merciful to me a sinner."

No man ever forgets the contrast in the picture of the Pharisee and publican. Each confesses what he is. One says he is a sinner, the other thanks God that he is a saint. One calls on God for mercy, the other invites the admiration and approval of God. One is full of humility in the consciousness of sin and unworthiness; the other is bloated with pride in the mistaken estimate of his own righteousness. The one goes down from God's house a forgiven man; the other goes away with the doom of the hypocrite on his soul. The lessons can never be made more emphatic and unmistakable.



LESSON 8.

FEBRUARY 20, 1916.

The Christian Brotherhood at Jerusalem.

(Temperance Lesson.)

MOTTO TEXT—"Love one another from the heart fervently." (1 Peter 1: 22.)

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 4: 32-5: 16.

MEMORY VERSES, 34, 35.

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Lesson Text.

32 And with the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

36 And Jesus, who by the apostles was surnamed Bar-na-bas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

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

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

3 But Peter said, An-a-ni-as, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

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

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

Mutual Love.

JESUS is gradually organizing the church at Jerusalem and filling it with beautiful fellowship. Whenever before was it known that men dropped their selfishness and made their goods the common property of their brethren? It is an instance of genuine Christian communism. It will not last, but for the emergency; it is useful, and is a complete demonstration of the rulership of Jesus. The baptism of the Spirit is bearing its proper fruit. The headship of Christ is fully recognized and acknowledged in the new community. The leadership of the divine Spirit is heartily believed and confessed. That the apostles are their human guides, under the Spirit, and by the authority of Christ, is joyously admitted and accepted. The apostles have the kingdom-idea of the Master, yet more or less dimly. It is too great for sudden grasp. Multitudes of Christians now fail to see it. All the new brotherhood understand the laws of the kingdom—love, service and sacrifice. Of this we are certified by the cheerful division of goods for the common good. They have one heart and one soul. Selfishness is buried in the grave of baptism, symbolically, and they are symbolically raised to walk in newness of life. The symbol is now translated into conduct. Without this baptism is a mockery. The Jerusalem church has made a good start. It is the continuation of the work of Jesus.

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Barnabas.

Here was one of the noble church members. He was of the tribe of Levi, but had been a citizen of the Island of Cyprus. He had come to Pentecost, and had felt the power of Peter's sermon, and had given himself to Christ. His genial, liberal soul soon made him one of the most helpful members. The church was filled with the poor, and for relief, well-to-do brethren sold farms and houses and laid the money down at the apostles' feet. Under the same impulse Barnabas sold his farm in Cyprus and put the price in the common treasury. These large and liberal givers naturally won a warm place in the hearts of the dependent multitude of brethren

and sisters. They were marked persons. Their influence grew, and they were much spoken of, loved and honored. Barnabas is the only one named of this generous class, due possibly to his social eminence and ability. The high respect of his brethren was precious to him.

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Ananias.

There is a dark blot on the first fair page of the record. Here sprang up from within the church a damaging and degrading fact. The outward for is less dangerous than the inward evil. One of the members, with his wife, gave an awful shock to the brotherhood. Ananias told an inexcusable lie, and played the hypocrite. He sold his land and professed to give all the money to the apostles, but dishonestly kept back part. He wanted credit for the gift of all, while retaining part for himself. What was his motive? He wanted to be as big a man as Barnabas in the church's esteem. He was ambitious for honor and praise, and tried to purchase it with a lie. Peter found it out some way, and instantly church discipline was applied. Corruption like this would destroy the work of Jesus. It must be relentlessly purged. Peter's moral detestation was aroused. He calls the culprit in and charges him with sin. You have lied, not to men, but to the Holy Spirit. This property was yours to handle as you please. No one compelled you to sell. You have outraged the Spirit of God, and all the sanctities of our holy religion. He was speechless. He fell down and died. The fear of God was on the brotherhood. The cancer was cut out, and Jesus continued in his blessed work.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Christian Brotherhood at Jerusalem. Acts 4: 22-37.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"They had all things common."

Best to the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

The church is not a social club. That is one place on earth where earthly distinctions are dropped, and men and women meet as equals before God. All are the children of

the Most High. There is the true democracy of the Spirit. The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Selfishness and Lying. Acts 5: 1-10.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"Believers were the more added to the Lord."

Notice two facts. First, the church has asserted its freedom from the dictation of the Jewish council; second, it has purified itself of the leaven of hypocrisy. No more hypocrites will want to enter it. The cause is healthy, the church is united, and the apostles are clothed with power. Preaching goes bravely on, and many people are being converted. There is Jesus' model for all his churches in all the ages. How can a church prosper when crippled with wrangling and mean ambitions? How can it be useful in a community when sin and selfishness go unrebuked? Here is Jesus' model of a noble church.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Mutual Helpfulness. Rom. 15: 1-9a.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"Christ pleased not himself."

He did many things irksome and unpleasant. He was not set to defend his own rights or to satisfy his personal desires. He was perfectly monopolized in doing good for others. There was not one touch of selfishness on his pure soul. Now, he says to you and me: "Follow me." In our profession of faith, in our baptism we solemnly promised to do it. How are we keeping our sacred pledge? Oh, we can't fool the Master! He sees and knows. He understands the measure of our religious honor. Shall we not resolve to be more like him? God forbid that we should walk in a vain show.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Forthrightness and Helpfulness. Gal. 6: 1-10.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"Bear ye one another's burdens."

This is fulfilling the law of Christ, who said love one another. You notice how Paul, Peter and all the rest appeal to the sovereign supremacy of Jesus. Perfect goodness, truth and beauty unified in one glorious Person has the right to rule in men's hearts. Submission to him is the health, peace and life of men. We were made for that. Apart from him

we are victims of wither and death. We can't get near to him without drawing close to every man as a neighbor. We can't be Christians if we have not his Spirit, and if we have the Spirit, our brothers will know it by our helpfulness.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Feasting and Folly. Dan. 5: 1-9.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"His countenance was changed."

The handwriting on the wall is against everyone who determines to stay in the self-centered life. Belshazzar's soul had no high ideals. Pleasure and self-gratification were his idols. Real concern for the people's good, to him, was an unknown feeling. So the luxurious, licentious king passed the days and years. His character was rotting. His vices moved the invisible hand that wrote on the wall. Those are weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your story of life is failure. Christ's plan is to win every man to the highest success and noblest living. How men do need him in all this world!

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Death of John the Baptist. Mark 6: 14-20.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"He brought his head in a charger."

LESSON 9.

FEBRUARY 27, 1916.

"The Seven Helpers."

MOTTO TEXT.—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6: 2.)

LESSON PASSAGE, ACTS 6.

MEMORY VERSES, 2, 3.

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Lesson Text.

1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

The birthday party of Herod was proper and enjoyable. But it degenerated into a drunken revel such as is not unfamiliar in our own day. His guilty wife timed her scheme well, sending her daughter to dance, just when the maudlin group were boozey enough to appreciate an indecent performance. Herod made her a great promise. The mother used it to glut her vengeance on the brave preacher. John had denounced her impurity and Herod's. The man accepted the situation, but not so with the fenshish woman. John's head was the price of a lascivious dance. Jesus aims to end all this manner of life.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Condemned for Drunkenness. Isr. 29: 1-8.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"Woe to the city where David dwelt."

Jerusalem society in Isaiah's day was worldly and corrupt as heathenism. Festivals and luxurious revels went on all the year. It was a carnival of worldliness and riotous indulgence. Religion was a sham, and idolatry supplanted Jehovah. The prophet was scorned and hated for his sermons. The handwriting was on the wall, and Isaiah interpreted it bravely. The city opens for destruction; nothing can save it from its doom but repentance toward God. Sin is a destroyer of individuals, families and nations. How the world needs Jesus and his gospel. Christianity is a world saving scheme.

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicodemus a proselyte of Antioch.

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

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Prosperity.

The exercise of discipline in the case of Ananias was followed by immense activity and progress. The preaching was in power, and the five thousand membership was largely increased. The Jewish council seeing their command despised, were greatly enraged. They arrested all the apostles, imprisoned and whipped them; then released them with renewal of the prohibition, not to preach in the name of Jesus. Looking on their stripes as badges of honor from God, they ceased not for a single day to preach in their homes, and in the temple itself. The church has become a new and independent religious force in Jerusalem. The council was silently ignored and defied. Christianity was quietly, slowly, inevitably separating itself and throwing off the yoke of Judaism. The religion of the Spirit was rising up out of a religion of dead formalism, resistless as a flood.

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Inward Trouble.

The multitude of indigent members who had to be fed steadily increased. Those who distributed the charity funds stirred up a dangerous discontent among those members who were not of the Jerusalem community. Those of foreign birth and speech were discriminated against in favor of the home people. It was evidently not accidental, but intentional. Partisan prejudice and favoritism aroused a storm and ruined the peace of the church. A mass of plain, common people, though Christians, are hard to manage, especially when there is a sense of wrong among them. They were far from perfect. Suspicion, jealousy and resentment are always too easily excited. The apostles were distressed, and preaching was paralyzed. No doubt they themselves came in for criticism and reproach. No disaster to a church like a bad quarrel within. Something had to be done quickly. The Spirit guided.

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Seven Deacons.

Completer church organization is the need. If the apostles are to preach, the distribution of food to so large a congregation of the poor becomes impossible. A special body of men must take it in hand. The apostles will not appoint in their own power, but the church must elect. See the democracy of early Christianity. The twelve described to the church the kind of men needed; men of good reputation, zealous piety and common sense. You choose, and we will ordain. The whole

body was pleased with the plan, and chose the seven they wanted. Strange fact; there is not a Jewish name among them. All from the foreign-born brethren, the very class that had been wronged. Something magnanimous in that. The Spirit of God calmed and enlarged the minds of the more numerous home-born members. Thank God for big-hearted people who love their church and despise the scandal of a church row. Jesus had his way. The Spirit guided, the apostles ordained, and sweet peace came again. The tempest passed, the church was organized, and the happy ministers, untrammelled, filled Jerusalem with the good news.

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Results.

The deaconship is a peace measure. The good deacon is to fight discord; he is set for harmony and good will in the church. He is a misfit, and ought to resign if he is bull-headed and bent on his own way. The seven were a happy choice. Discontent and strife fled before them; the church had new power, and note this significant fact, unheard of before. A great company of the priests became obedient to the faith! There is a wonderful victory. The very walls of Judaism are crumbling before an army, terrible with banners. He that believeth on me, the work that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do. Jesus works through the Spirit, the Spirit works through apostles and all Christians. The work of the deacons was a factor in the great victory.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Seven Helpers. Acts 6.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"The saying pleased the whole multitude."

Better, completer organization was the necessity. Church polity was not made before hand. It grew out of the conditions as they arose. The deaconship was born in an emergency. The growing church has its business side as well as its spiritual, and both are sacred. A church must take care of its poor and pay its debts. It has temporal interests and affairs that cannot be neglected without damage to its spiritual interests. The deacon's office is a holy one, and calls for much more than passing the bread and wine at the supper. When the business side of your church is loose and weak, you will find every thing else weak.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Seventy Sent Out. Luke 10: 1-9.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"He sent them two by two before his face."

Our historian Luke is the only one who relates this event. Not one name of the seventy is mentioned. They, too, are to meet an emergency in our Lord's work. He intends to evangelize all Israel, the time is short, and the apostles cannot meet the demand. His ministry is nearing its end. The ruler's wrath will smite him soon. Note the Master's faith in the future of the gospel, his courage and his grace. All the Jewish people shall have the invitation. Every community shall hear the words of salvation. Every destitute corner of the land must have the good news. Later he broadens the commission to the whole world. Are you interested in his plan?

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Two by Two. Mark 6: 4-13.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"He gave them power."

Already he, in company with his disciples, had made two circuits preaching in Galilee. He is now beginning a third round. The disciples have had long training in the Master's company, now he is going to trust them in separate missions of their own. They are advanced enough in the spiritual message and method to try their own banks. It is an advance in the training which is to fit them for independent work when he is gone. He gives lessons in tact and common sense and speeds them forth. They go with alacrity, and come back flushed with victory. Lord, we have met with great success, but all through thy name.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Divine Helper. Lev. 26: 3-13.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"I will be your God."

Obedience is the supreme virtue in the kingdom of God. Submission of will to the Holy One, the just and loving God. This is the one deep and all-embracing principle of true religion, and it runs equally through the Old and the New Testaments. Abraham, Moses and the prophets based everything on that, and Jesus made it the central aim of his life. The will of God on earth is the sole great aim of Christianity. No good is thinkable beyond that. All temporal blessings are folded up in it; all beauty of character, all spiritual achievement and blessedness is conditioned upon it. Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, and so enter into the fullness of his glory.

FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Fellow Workers. Phil. 4: 1-7.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"Help those women."

We are co-workers with God when we labor with our brethren and sisters to build up the cause of Christ in the community. What are you doing? Do you help the good women? Are you any comfort to your pastor? Do you ever say a word to cheer the deacons or the Sunday school workers? Yes, I hope you do. Else, what are you and I in the church for? Isn't it true that some churches are loaded down with idle and useless members? And is it not commonly true that right out of this crowd will come the grouches, the fault-finding, the kickers? The busy workers find no time or inclination for such wickedness. For his sake be a helper.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Division of Labor. Exodus 18: 13-27.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"They shall bear the burden with thee."

Moses' father-in-law had sense. The multitude of work was wearing Moses out. From morning to evening he sat judging the cases in dispute among the people. The case is somewhat parallel to that of the apostles, charged with daily preaching and waiting on tables. Moses took the wise suggestion and appointed helpers, wise true men, who could settle small cases and leave him to the larger cares of the nation. When a pastor has to preach, run Sunday school, look after finances, attend to discipline and other matters, what kind of a church is it? Organize, divide labor, and everyone do his part. That is God's way.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Supreme Helper. Isa. 41: 8-16.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee."

"I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Paul means Jesus. Again he speaks of the Christian being girded with might in the inner man by the Spirit. Isaiah gives us the language of God: "I will uphold thee." Here is the unity of the triune God active in the guiding and energizing of men. Luke in Acts preserves this order in the divine helpers: Spirit, Jesus, God. What a mighty reinforcement to us. There is no place or excuse for failure in our tasks. Only one force in this world can defeat the plan of God, and that is the human will. Whosoever will. If any man willeth to do his will he shall know the truth.

LESSON 10.

The Death of Stephen.

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

LESSON PASSAGE, Acts 7: 1-8: 3.

MEMORY VERSES, 7: 59, 60.

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Lesson Text.

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

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

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

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

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

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

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

1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.

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

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

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Expansion.

The selection of seven Grecian Jews for the deaconship made an epoch in the Jerusalem church. The hour struck for larger interpretation of the gospel and the beginning of its spread over the world. Two of the

deacons zealously exceeded their special task and went to preaching as well. Why should not a deacon, or any layman, preach? If he can, let him give witness to Jesus. These Grecians, Stephen and Philip, were men of fine minds and liberal views. Contact with Greek intellectual culture had taught them to think, Stephen especially. He saw that the mind of Christ was broader and deeper than that of Peter and John. Their minds were conservative and by no means wholly free from Jewish narrowness. Fortunately, Stephen was free and progressive. To him the gospel is a principle of love and service as wide as the world, destined to pass beyond temple ritual and even to abrogate many of the laws of Moses. He had brains to see, and courage to speak. This was a new theology that no one else had dared to see or utter. Instantly it aroused debate, and Stephen confounded his opponents. The beaten adversary's recourse is to appeal to force. They hailed him before the council, charging him with blasphemy against the temple and Moses' law. He was the predecessor of Paul.

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Stephen's Defense.

You are apt to weary of the speech until you see how it fits the speaker's ideas of an expansive gospel. He sketches the whole history of Israel from Abraham down to the present. (1) God's dealing has shown constant progress with accompanying changes. (2) God's deliverer, Moses, was first rejected and then welcomed. His prophets were stoned, and later monuments were built in their honor. (3) The temple is God's house truly, but he says expressly that he is not confined to it. (4) Moses himself was a prophet of Jesus. You men of this council have not obeyed Moses' law. Stiff-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ear, you are always resisting the Holy Spirit. As with your fathers, so with you. You have betrayed and murdered the Just One. You prate of Moses' law and break it; you extol the temple and defile it.

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Death of Stephen.

Of course they killed the brave deacon. How can they endure longer the charge of murdering the Son of God? Peter could

mitted that outrage years ago. The increasing multitude of Nazarene believers constantly repeat the charge in the streets. We sit still, hoping and waiting for a growing menace to die. Forbearance is no longer a virtue. We have followed Gamaliel's advice of patience, until even this foreign-born Jew dares to insult and defy us. Anger burst into flame, and they stoned him to death. "Brandling us," said they, "he has blasphemed God." So said the French Catholic church of Voltaire, when he denounced it as infamous. They put on him the stigma of "atheist," though he built a church to the honor of God and the service of humanity. The dying Stephen's face shone like an angel's as he prayed for his murderers. Young Saul witnessed it as he held the executioners' clothes. That face and that prayer stayed in his memory.

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Persecution.

This martyrdom was the signal to stamp out the pernicious heresy. Strike and spare not. Sweep the pestilent mob out of the city. The church was scattered, and went everywhere preaching the word. It took a heavy hand to set the church on its missionary errand. Saul distinguished himself for pitiless zeal in uprooting the church. Do you notice that the apostles escaped? Persecution did not light on them. Why? They did not preach Stephen's views. From that time on the dissemination of the gospel is no longer an exclusively apostolic function.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Defense of Stephen. Acts 7: 1-14.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"Moved with jealousy agal st Joseph."

Do you see the logical order with which Stephen approaches the thunder clap at the close? He takes the first instance of Jewish jealousy at superior excellence and develops it to its culmination in the crucifixion of Jesus. That national trait he follows straight through Israel's record. Joseph had fair dreams and great hopes. This was a prophecy of a noble career of usefulness. The brothers resented the implication of inferiority. They sold him to slavery. Afterward they bowed to the earth before his majesty, and received the grace of forgiveness. Stephen sees the similitude to the council and the treatment they gave to the Son of God.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Israel in Egypt. Acts 7: 15-30.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"But they understood not."

Abraham's children suffered many things in Egypt when a king arose who knew not Joseph. Moses, gifted and well educated, turned from the pleasures of the palace and tendered his service to his oppressed brethren. He supposed that his people knew that God, by his hand, was giving them deliverance. They did not understand. They were offended at him, they rejected and thrust him away. After forty years of anguish in their prison house, Moses came back and led them to freedom. In Stephen's mind this parallel to recent events in Jerusalem is perfectly plain. The nation's jealousy is consistent throughout. God's servants habitually rejected.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Moses the Deliverer. Acts 7: 31-41.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"They turned back in their hearts unto Egypt."

God sent Moses to bring the Hebrews out of Egypt into Canaan. When the journey became toilsome, they complained of Moses. Many were the cruel, stupid insults flung into his face. Slenderously they accused him of being their enemy, leading them to certain death in the desert. They renounced his leadership once, and outraged God with an idol. Here was spiritual blindness and hardness of heart. They broke Moses' heart. He told them that God would raise up unto them another prophet like unto himself. That great prophet has come, is Stephen's plain implication, and he has been treated even worse than Moses was. Jealousy does its work still in Israel.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Divine Dwelling Place. Acts 7: 42-50.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"Solomon built him a house."

Said Stephen, the fathers thought that God dwelt in the wilderness tabernacle only. When times changed and the temple was built, they thought that was his only dwelling place, that it alone was sacred as the place of the divine presence. All this was erroneous. At the dedication Solomon said that the great God dwells not exclusively in temples made with hands. So testified the prophets. The council could not miss the meaning. Wherever God is, with Abraham, with Moses, with the children of obedience in any land, there is his sanctuary. God is Spirit, and his habitation is the human heart. The un-

expressed hint is, God dwells with this church, established in Jerusalem, by the authority of Jesus Christ.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Death of Stephen. Acts 7: 51-8: 3.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"Saul was consenting to his death."

Devout men gave Stephen honorable burial, and lamented his fall. His great indictment was the match that lit the fires of persecution. Luke names one of the most furious of the Pharisees. The evident purpose is to introduce us to the man who is going to be the ablest defender of the cause of Jesus. Jesus will arrest the fiery Saul, and make him the preëminent expounder of the gospel as well as the greatest missionary of the world. Paul will take the cue of Stephen's thought and develop it to the full. His mighty work will occupy most of the remaining record in the Acts of what Jesus continued to do and the Holy Spirit inspired.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Reward of Faithful Witness. 2 Tim. 1: 1-8.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"I have fought a good fight."

This is the self-testimony of the man who held the clothes of the men who stoned Stephen.

LESSON 11.

Heroes and Martyrs of Faith.

MOTTO TEXT.—"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12: 1, 2).

LESSON PASSAGE, Heb. 11: 1-12: 2.

MEMORY VERSES, 12: 1, 2.

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Lesson Text.

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of Dauid also, and Samu'el, and of the prophets:

hen at least thirty-five years ago. The Spirit turned that mighty intellect to God, and gave him a mission from Christ the Lord. It meant surrender of all he held dearest in life; it meant untold hardships and sufferings; it meant total self-sacrifice and death. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. He was a magnificent instrument in the hands of Jesus for extending and establishing the Kingdom of God in the high points of the civilized world. He lived the Christ life, and kept the faith. His crown is assured.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Help of God. Psalm 91: 1-12.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"He is my refuge and my fortress."

The God of Jacob is our refuge, and the everlasting arms are underneath. Your lives are hid with Christ in God. The flame shall not hurt thee, the waters shall not overflow thee. None shall ever take thee out of his hand. You are kept by the power of God unto everlasting life. I am thy sun and shield, the everlasting God is thy reward. What doth the Lord require of thee, but to love mercy, do justly and walk humbly with thy God?

Here, Lord, I give myself to Thee.

'Tis all that I can do.

'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

MARCH 12, 1916.

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection;

36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

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The Connection.

This great chapter is vitally related to all that came before it, and is the climax of the author's argument for steadfast hold on Jesus. You must remember the circumstances that called for this epistle. Jewish Christians had suffered much for their faith in Christ. Those especially, in Palestine, had felt the contempt and scorn of their Hebrew neighbors. They were as social outcasts. Then they were argued with and appealed to, to return to the religion of their fathers. Said they, "You have no temple, no priesthood, no sacrifices in this new-fangled religion. You have accepted as a leader a Nazarene fanatic and given up Abraham, Moses and the prophets. You have joined a rabble of ignorant Jews, and a horde of unenlightened Gentiles. It is a shame. Really you have no religion at all. Come back to the assemblies and feasts and worship of your own people, the chosen people of God." Now, in those days of trouble you may be sure that all these influences tried mightily the strength of the unhappy Hebrew Christians. Doubtless many gave up Christianity and went back to Judaism. In painful doubt and affliction many more were still holding to the new faith in Jesus. It was a time of peril; so the author of this epistle gave them the counter arguments to ground them in an enduring confidence in the gospel.

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Christianity.

The argument of the epistle is the superiority of the new dispensation. The proofs are: (1) It was introduced by the Son of God;

the old by angels. (2) Jesus secures immediate access to God; under the old, it was through the chamber of the temple, the holy of holies. (3) Jesus is the one eternal sacrifice for sin; under the old, sacrifices were continuous and never made the corners thereunto perfect. (4) Jesus is an eternal perfect priest; under the old, the priests were many, imperfect and subject to death. The superiority is overwhelming and incontestable. (5) The new dispensation is everlasting; the old was temporary. (6) The new is the consummation of God's eternal purpose; the old was a system preparatory to it, and hence designed to vanish.

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Faith.

It is trust, the confidence of one person in another. The invisible God made promises to the ancient fathers. Abraham, the father of our people, says the author, received the great promise of blessing to himself, his descendants, and to all the world. Israel was organized around this vast hope. Moses put its political, social and religious elements into the new nation. The prophets steadily enlarged the knowledge of God, and made sublime predictions respecting the final fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Never did they regard the temple and the sacrifices and the priesthood and the law as the completion of that promise. Faith looked beyond all this. Brethren, Jesus was the object of the long cherished faith of Israel. He was the desire of all nations. He is the promise of God. He is the supreme realization of the long Hebrew dream, and hope, and aspiration.

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Faith's Works.

It made brave and patient men of those who clung to it. They made sacrifices, endured toils, suffered hungers and thirsts, contempt and hate, scourgings and tortures. It had that roll of honor, the noblest heroes of whom the world was not worthy. Brethren, the very hope of the promise of God made them strong. Now the promise has come. Jesus is its glorious reality. You have given yourselves to him. Shall you now become cowards and prove unworthy of the mighty host who became martyrs to the hope of his coming? What a mighty argument, what a tremendous appeal to steadfast faith!

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Heroes of Faith. Heb. 11: 1-10.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"Without faith it is impossible to please him."

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Faith is impossible of complete and satisfactory definition. One way to put it is this. It is a full persuasion that God is; that he is supreme in wisdom, power and goodness. It is the perfect conviction that a man owes to God a perfect submission and obedience. It is the decision of the will to surrender itself unconditionally and unreservedly to the will of God. When a man sees and obeys God, he has faith. Without that, how can a man please God? How can he be noble, wise and good? God's complete revelation of himself is in Jesus. Repentance toward God and faith in Christ is the supreme duty of men.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Triumphs of Faith. Heb. 11: 17-31.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"Accounting that God was able to raise him up."

Abraham stood the test of an awful sacrifice. I would rather die than see the death of my son. Abraham took his own cross and went to virtual crucifixion. It was the farthest that self-abnegation could go. Faith had its highest expression in a man who was worthy to be called the father of the faithful and the friend of God. In that hour of darkness he discovered the fact of the resurrection of the dead. He believed, though his son were dead, God would raise him up. So great was his confidence in the promise of God. What a triumph. No discovery of science can be compared with it. Faith accepts total consecration and stagers not. Believe in God.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Martyrs of Faith. Heb. 11: 32-12: 2.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"God having provided some better thing for us."

The old heroes and martyrs won their high place on God's roll of honor through faith in his promise, which they did not obtain. The better thing God held for us, and that is the realization of the promise in Christ. He would not have them perfected apart from us which means that we are above them in privilege. They had to wait for a Saviour to come; to us he is a present reality. Our blessedness is the completion of their hope. They and we are saved by faith, but our advantage is the actual vision of God in the face of Jesus. Without this neither they nor we would be perfect as respects the blessings of the gospel.

THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Price of Discipleship. Matt. 10: 34-42.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"He that loveth his life shall lose it."

That means simply this: The man who lives selfishly, who follows his own unregulated impulses, who is absorbed in his own interests, and regards not God nor his neighbors, shall utterly fall of the highest good. He shall be a moral and spiritual failure in God's world. He shall lose his best and truest life. This world is full of selfishness. It is the feebleness, the dry rot of many who profess to be Christians. Selfishness is the bottom sin of the world. It kills the soul. Self-denial, self-renunciation, self-sacrifice is the unchangeable law of Christ, the term of discipleship. Guard against the movements of your own selfishness.

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Partakers of Christ's Sufferings. 1 Peter 4: 12-19.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial."

The early Christians never dreamed that Jesus alone was to be a cross-bearer. All who live in him as partakers of his life and character must expect to meet the trials that came to the Master. It is the Christ life that the world hates. Identify yourself with it, and you must expect hostility and trouble. Think it not a strange thing. It is the natural and inevitable thing in a selfish world. Christ has his sorrows and his joys. He weeps for us to both. Real discipleship commits to both. Paul was able to rejoice in that he considered his sufferings the filling up of what was wanting in the sufferings of Christ.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Security in God. Jude 17-25.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"To keep you and present you faultless."

All our help comes from God. Life is a struggle. Don't lament that fact. Without it we should have no moral character. The oppositions and difficulties round about us are a call to manhood within us. They are a challenge to resolution and courage; they are the conditions of a growing faith and a victorious life. Let us keep in mind what the Father wants us to be. It is no small achievement that he sets before us. It is really a divine compulsion, to be urged on to high tasks amid adverse conditions. But what encouragements! I will help thee. I will keep thee safe.

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Psalm of Faith. Heb. 3.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"We are made partakers of Christ."

That is a lofty conception. The believer in Jesus. We enter into his thoughts; we accept his teaching and his authority; we go deeper and enter into his mind and spirit. I

live in Christ, and Christ liveth in me. The apostles believed and acted on this, not as a view or notion, but as a literal fact. Christ is a partaker of our nature; that we, by faith, may become partakers of his nature. "He that receiveth you receiveth me. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me. Christ with us, Christ in us." To what a holy, unselfish life you and I are committed.

LESSON 12.

MARCH 19, 1916.

Philip and the Ethiopian.

MOTTO TEXT.—"Understand thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8: 30b.)

LESSON PASSAGE, ACTS 8: 26-40.

MEMORY VERSES, 28-31.

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Lesson Text.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusa-lem unto Ga'za, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went; and, behold, a man of Ethio'pia, an eunuch of great authority under Can'da'c'e queen of the Ethio'pia, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jeru'sa-lem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esai'as the prophet.

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

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

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

32 The piece of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth;

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

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

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jeru'sa.

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

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

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

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at Azo'tus; and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cas-sa-r'a.

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Philip.

Who is he? Why, he is one of the seven Grecian deacons of Jerusalem. His brother, Stephen, is dead. Jesus used him and honored him by making him a partaker of his sufferings. That death was the beginning of the persecution which scattered the church, and as deacon Philip has no poor to serve, he turns to preaching Jesus and the resurrection. Isn't it really remarkable, the prominence these two deacons took in the Christian ministry? Stephen was not second to the apostles in interpreting Christ and his gospel; Philip has the honor of going before them in the work of spreading the gospel. Of course, it stirred no jealousy. The apostles were too noble for that. Philip went down to Samaria, and his preaching won instant success. He drove out demons, and many were converted. Simon Magus made profession and was baptized. Ananias was

a hypocrite for his vanity and love of praise. Peter exposed him, and the church was cleansed.

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Simon Magus.

There is another type of hypocrite, who is made so by the love of money. He had astonished the people by the wonderful juggleries of his magic arts. They stared at him and thought him a remarkable person. Fact is, he told them that he was the power of God. Fakers and frauds can get a following yet. Peter and John, hearing of Phillip's revival, came down to Samaria, and through them the converts received the Holy Spirit. That power, to impart the Spirit, gave Simon a new idea. "I am willing to pay a big sum for the secret." The dense stupidity, the blasphemy of it! Peter was horrified. "Death to you and your money, for dreaming you could buy the gift of God. Repent of this wickedness and ask God to forgive you are a bitter poison and a pack of evil." The wretch was alarmed at Peter's rebuke, and humbling himself, said: "Pray for me." Thus Peter disposed of two early cases of disgraceful selfishness; the hypocrisy of vanity and the viler hypocrisy of covetousness. Would that the power of God might sweep these hypocrites out of all our churches. Pride and sluggishness, vanity and avarice, still afflict and cripple the Christianity of today.

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The Ethiopian.

Phillip's lot in Samaria ended, and a new task opened up. The Spirit of God has a use for men like him. He is a fine evangelist, and ready to go where the Lord may choose. Peter and John exercised themselves in evangelism in several villages as they returned to Jerusalem. The city might be safe for them, but not for Phillip. He got an impression from God that he ought to go down south toward Egypt, and away he went. At wayside a bad impulse, but always obey a good one. He met a stranger from far south, who had been to Jerusalem to worship. He was a distinguished man. As he rode in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah. Phillip ventured to introduce himself, and was not repulsed. He then courteously asked, "Do you understand this Scripture?" "No," said the man, "how can I without someone to explain it?" He was reading that profoundly tender passage in Isaiah 53. It was Phillip's opportunity. The Spirit of God helped him to expound it, and to show that it had been fulfilled in the life, death, and

resurrection of Jesus. The commandments of Jesus were all stated. The man believed. As they rode, they came to some water. The new convert immediately demanded baptism. The chariot was stopped, both of them went down into the water and Phillip baptized him. His work done, Phillip departs and the Ethiopian goes on his way rejoicing. He will carry the good news to the south, and the blessed Phillip will continue his labors in other parts.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. The Gospel in Samaria. Acts 8: 4-13.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"Preached Christ unto them."

This was the first start of the gospel, away from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the world. The theme of the first preaching will be the only theme to the end of the ages. Jesus is the largest subject that ever engaged the mind and heart of men. His character, his aim, his work, his kingdom, his will, his relations to God and men, his glory. He is the power of God and the manifold wisdom of God. He is the great sinner and sinner-bearer, the Lord of heaven and earth. Who is equal to preaching the Son of God? Who can measure the magnitude of him, or portray his majesty? Paul himself never felt that he could preach Jesus as he ought to be preached.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. Sin and Repentance. Acts 8: 14-25.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"Repent of this thy wickedness."

Sin is an abomination to Jesus. He spurned it, no foul touch did it ever put on his soul. To preach the purity of Jesus is to produce conviction of sin. He is God's plumb line dropped down beside your life and mine, to reveal the glaring unevenness and crookedness of our characters. There is nothing in the world so potent to create a sense of sin as the white righteousness of Christ. Repent, turn, confess guilt and unrighteousness, and call on him for mercy. His pitying love insures a pardon, full and free. Then follow him in an humble, persevering obedience. He was perfectly obedient to the will of God.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Phillip and the Ethiopian. Acts 8: 26-40.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—They went down both into the water.

Preaching Jesus omits nothing he taught and commanded. Then the subject includes baptism. Jesus was baptized and commanded that his disciples follow the example. What was it? What would a casual reader who had never heard of the act before, imagine it to be? It is recorded that Jesus went down into the Jordan, John baptized him, and then he came up out of the water. What was the act in this case? What would your casual disinterested reader say it was? Doesn't it look like a case of immersion? That is exactly what it was. But let us not debate the form and forget its mighty spiritual meanings.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—A Disobedient Messenger. Jonah 1: 1-10.

THURSDAY'S VERSE.—"Go to Nineveh."

The book of Jonah has a great message. Israel is God's missionary to humanity. The writer recognizes that divine appointment and indicates in this story the nation's unwillingness to do her duty to heathen neighbors. I take the book to be designed to set forth these facts. Israel's obligation to teach the world about God, and the susceptibility of all nations to that truth. Go to Nineveh and preach the preaching I command thee. The path of obedience is always the place of safety. The way of the disobedient is beset with dangers and disasters. What are we doing to spread the knowledge of God?

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Foreigners Converted. Isa. 19: 18-25.

FRIDAY'S VERSE.—"The Lord shall be known to Egypt."

The great minds in Israel read the purpose of God. They knew it was not limited to the Hebrew nation. God's promise to Abraham was that of world-wide blessing. They knew that Jehovah was the God of the whole earth; that his justice and his goodness extended to all living men. Jonah's mission to

Nineveh meant just that. Isaiah's prediction of the evangelization of Egypt proclaims it. God's truth and love, like his sunshine, are designed for all nations. He honors his servants by appointing them to be his co-workers in filling the earth with the knowledge of his will.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Gentiles Follow the Gleam. Isa. 60: 1-9.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"Arise, shine, for thy light has come."

Here is a mission call as plain and clear as language can make it. Isaiah sees the glory of the coming of the Lord. He sees Jerusalem in that good day clothed in the beauty of God and going forth to gladden the children of earth with the good news. He sees the Gentiles turning to God, and his kingdom widening in spiritual conquest. Alas, the city failed. She crucified her Lord. But yet the prophet's words hold true. In a way he dreamed not of the glad tidings did go out from Jerusalem. It is our task to keep the good work going, until all the Gentiles come to his light.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Gentiles Become Fellow Citizens. Eph. 2: 11-22.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"He hath broken down the middle wall of partition."

Later Judaism became constricted, narrow and exclusive. They monopolized the favor of God, became blind to spiritual truth and the missionary spirit. Such a nation will kill a Messiah like Jesus of Nazareth, for he will not spare their degenerate system of faith nor the hypocrisy it cultivates. He tears down dividing walls which national self-conceit has bulldozed between Jews and the Gentile neighbors. He introduces a spiritual democracy, in which all men of every race have equal access to the throne of God. Christianity demolished the partition walls of Judaism. Blessed be his name.



LESSON 13.

MARCH 26, 1916.

The One God and One World.

(Missionary Lesson.)

MORNING TEXT.—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20: 3.)

LESSON PASSAGE, Exodus 20: 3-6; Romans 1: 18-23; 28: 2, 3; Ephesians 1: 19b-23.

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Lesson Text.

(Exodus 20: 3-6.)

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me:

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

(Rom. 1: 18-23; Rom. 1: 28-2: 3.)

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness:

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

25 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornications, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whispers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

(Ephesians 1: 19b-23.)

according to the work of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

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One God.

IDOLATRY is man's worship of his lower nature. The darkened intellect and the lawless imagination defiled the human passions, and men became brutish in heart, glorying in their own shame. Yet, in all this, there was apparent the human instinct for God. The God

of Abraham began to rise, like the sun, on the black night. He revealed himself as the Almighty. That smote to death the gods many, for one only can be Almighty. Next he revealed himself as just and holy, and that condemned unrighteousness forever. Last, he revealed himself as the God of love, and that put eternal ban on discord and hate. There is one God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, creator of all things, and ruler of men. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and him only shalt thou serve. Jesus brought in the fullness of this great revelation. There is One God over all; there is one human race, one great love, and one great salvation. This is the gospel, and it sprung the religion we call Christianity. Here are its divine elements: One God and Father over all, One Saviour for all, and one Holy Spirit for the quickening and guidance of all. These three constitute a mysterious unity of redeeming grace, One God.

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His Kingdom.

It is the purpose of God to rule in the hearts of men whom he has made. He will fill the world full of the knowledge of himself. His great design is that his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Men shall be as perfect in righteousness as himself. They shall be made conformable to the image of his only begotten Son. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Such is the divine aim, such is the heavenly program. Do let us try to rise up in thought to the vast enterprise. We have so long been habituated to the thought of getting to heaven when we die that it has obscured to us God's purpose of making a heaven here on earth. Remember Christ's words, the Son of man who is in heaven. He was then in Palestine. God's idea is that wherever there is perfect purity and obedience, there heaven is. Be energetic to make a paradise here, rather than languidly hope for one hereafter. The future will be bright and glorious truly, but God's emphasis is on, now and here. Christians must come to the mind of God in this matter, and they are coming. Our age is mightily astray on this very question.

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Missions.

We are co-workers with God. First in the effort to bring ourselves to a faithful obedience to his will, to the perfecting of our own characters. Second, we are to co-work with him in spreading the knowledge of his Son.

The two efforts are not divided. They are one answer to the prayer he taught us to make: thy kingdom come. The great commission is plain and unmistakable: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Not a Christian on earth is exempt from this obligation. One God, one Saviour, one Spirit, and one gospel designed for one race. Obedience to our call involves three qualities: Love, service and sacrifice. That is the whole biography and character of Jesus. That was his mind and spirit. If a man have not the mind of Christ, he is none of his. What do we for the unevangelized at home and abroad? Do appeals from Home and Foreign Missions worry and bore us? Do we say Lord, Lord, and neglect to do the things he said? Are we hoping to get to heaven some day, and yet deadly indifferent to making a heaven on earth? No, we will be co-workers in deed and in truth.

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MONDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Coming of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2: 1-11.

MONDAY'S VERSE.—"There appeared unto them tongues . . . like as of fire."

Jesus made them witnesses, preachers of his gospel. They still needed enlightenment and courage. The baptism of the Spirit gave both. The tongues of fire were striking symbols of their new vocation. God still needs witnesses. The Spirit's baptism is for you and me. He longs to put a waving tongue of fire on our heads. Are we willing? Do we want it? God still gives the Spirit to them who ask him. We live in a grand and awful time. There are signs of a great awakening in Christendom. Is your church alive, happy and aggressive? Brother, hear the bugle's note. Let us keep step with the advancing armies of the Lord.

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TUESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Peter's Sermon at Pentecost. Acts 2: 20-24; 29-41.

TUESDAY'S VERSE.—"Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Peter's sermon has been heard around the world. He would be astonished today at his earthly fame. He spoke things he did know with intense conviction and passionate earnestness. That makes an irresistible witness, a powerful preacher. Personal views and logical discussion do not get anywhere with a congregation. What does the speaker know about Jesus by experience? Is the Spirit of power on him? Is he in the pew? Only when we know Jesus as our personal friend and Saviour is our witness of any worth.

Think of the Spirit with us, in us now. No need to pray for his presence. Pray that we may be willing for him to use us.

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WEDNESDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—The Lame Man Leaping. Acts 3: 1-12.

WEDNESDAY'S VERSE.—"The people ran together unto them."

When God begins a great work in a community the people are sure to come. I know nothing so attractive as the place where men are being made new by the power of the Spirit. He healed the lame man, through his servant. That called the crowd, and Peter used the occasion to witness for Jesus. He needed to do it in his own behalf, for the people stared as though he himself were a wonder. Perish the thought that he should wear honor that belongs to his Master. He tells the story of human wickedness, and how God raised the Crucified One. How weak and silly is the preacher who is hungry for people's praise. He lacks power every time.

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THURSDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. The Christian Brotherhood at Jerusalem. Acts 4: 32-5: 5.

THURSDAY'S VERSE. "Were of one heart and soul."

There is a model church. (1) They loved one another. (2) They went to worship regularly. (3) The apostles preached with power. (4) Great grace was upon them, and converts were added daily. Here are the marks and attractions of a true church of Jesus Christ. How many congregations can honestly be now so described. Too often this is the condition. (1) Little knots of bitterness. (2) Irregular and discontinuous attendance at church. (3) Preacher crippled with discouragement. (4) Church almost dead, with rarely a convert. Why should it be so? A big revival comes, and then the disheartening relapse. Oh for a real baptism of the Spirit! Does the church really want it?

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FRIDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. The Death of Stephen. Acts 7: 54-8: 3.

FRIDAY'S VERSE. "He saw the glory of God."

After Jesus he was the best Christian martyr. Deacon that he was, he became the

foremost thinker and preacher in Jerusalem. They killed him for his true and daring interpretation of Jesus. They saw in him the annulment of Judaism, and the world's final religion in the Christianity of Christ. Paul later took up his interpretation, enlarged and completed it. All honor to Stephen. He literally took up his cross and followed the Master to death. We have martyrs still. They push the moralities of Christ into the world's business, and the vile whiskey traffic has killed them. They fight oppression of the poor, child labor and the demons of vice at cost of hate and peril.

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SATURDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING.—Phillip and the Ethiopian. Acts 8: 26-40.

SATURDAY'S VERSE.—"Preached unto him Jesus."

That was the only theme of the early church. He fills the whole horizon of life. He is the wisdom of God, and the Saviour of men. He reveals all God's love, and all the corruptions of the human heart. He is the bread of heaven, the author and nourisher of faith, the way, the truth and the life. Here is limitless range for the human intellect, an inexhaustible fountain for the human heart. Sirs, we would see Jesus. That is the hunger of the soul. Preacher, tell us about him. Do you want to hear about his will concerning you? Are you as much interested in the duties he assigns as in the glories he foretells? Let us hear *all* about Jesus.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READING. The One God and One World. Ex. 20: 3-6; Rom. 1: 18 23; 28: 2, 3; Eph. 1: 19b 23.

SUNDAY'S VERSE.—"I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God."

Let us pick up again Luke's Ideas. (1) One holy God. (2) One supreme Saviour. (3) One quickening Holy Spirit. (4) One sinful race of men. (5) One great aim, the kingdom of God on earth. (6) One absolute law of obedience to Christ, expressed in love, service and sacrifice. Get this scheme well lodged in your mind. It is immensely helpful in its unity, simplicity and grandeur. It sums up God's nature, aim and activity; man's nature, need, duty and destiny. Acts as a record of what the ever-living, present Christ is continuing to do to complete the divine program in the world.

Calendar

JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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MARCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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To-day

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We shall do so much in the years to come.

But what have we done today?

We shall give out gold in a princely sum.

But what did we give to-day?

We shall lift the heart and dry the tear.

We shall plant a hope in the place of fear.

We shall speak with words of love and cheer.

But what have we done to-day?

We shall be so kind in the after while.

But what have we been to-day?

We shall bring to each lonely life a smile.

But what have we brought to-day?

We shall give to truth a grander birth.

And to steadfast faith a deeper worth.

We shall feed the hungry souls of earth.

But whom have we fed to-day?

—Nixon Waterman.

