

LESSON REVIEW

--MARCH 21.--

Golden Text:-- "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word."--[Acts 8:4](#).

THE lesson for the quarter covered the first ten years of the Church's history, dating from our Lord's ascension. It is interesting to note the simplicity of the Divine arrangement. We find no mention of popes, cardinals, archbishops, doctors of divinity or reverends. On the contrary even the apostles are recorded as "ignorant and unlearned." Indeed, the terms evangelist, pastor, teacher, elder, deacon, apostle are the only titles recognized in the Church, according to the New Testament records. And these terms all signify, directly or indirectly, service rather than authority or dignity. Notice again that in that period of Divinely guided progress of the infant Church, no mention is made of fairs, festivals, suppers or shows to raise money for salaries or for Church erection; indeed, none of these subjects is ever mentioned in the New Testament -- subjects which today seem to constitute the principal feature of "church work." The Church work then was "preaching the Word." Does it not appear evident that the great change in these particulars has not been favorable to spiritual development?

We congratulate our readers that as associates in faith and service we find ourselves peculiarly different from the majority of Christian people of today, and peculiarly like the early Church in the particulars specified. Like them we have no formulated creed aside from the Bible. Like them, we have no Church "officers" or "rulers." Like them, we give little attention to Church edifices, but are content to meet in private houses, or in public buildings otherwise used on week days, or in synagogues already built and dedicated, if they are placed at our disposal, or in "upper rooms." Like them our chief business is "preaching the Word" --not preaching ourselves, nor human theories and traditions, nor Theosophy, nor philosophy, nor Evolution, nor "Science falsely so-called," nor even social reforms, good as some of them may be. Like them our preaching is sometimes in the street-car chariots, to Ethiopians or Whites, to rich or poor, to Pharisees and Doctors of the Law, and to the poor of every nation and tongue and sect and party. Like them we know the Truth and the Truth has made us free, and it is our pleasure to assist others into the same freedom, from ignorance, superstition and the wiles of the Adversary. [R4337 : page 57]

Like them the hope before us is the Kingdom of God's dear Son, and the prospect of a share in that Kingdom at the second coming of our Lord. Like them we have heard the good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people, and we are glad to sacrifice time, energy, strength, money, influence, all, for the privilege of being co-workers together with God in the calling of the Bride class; in the preparation for the Kingdom of God's dear Son. Like them we need no inducements of name, fame, salary, honor of men. Like them we delight to meet one with the other, and so much the more as we see the day drawing near. We need no operas, we need no salaried singers, we need no pulpit vaudeville to attract us. Like them we were hungering and thirsting for the Truth, and, having tasted of the good Word of God and been made partakers of the holy Spirit, we find that with the strength derived our appetite continues to increase, and we desire more and more of the Bread which came down from heaven, and of the Water of Life.

True, there are changes, adaptations to our time and present conditions. We do not wear turbans nor flowing robes nor sandals. We do not journey on camels, nor so much afoot, nor in sailing vessels. We use the printing press, the mail, the various means of rapid transit, etc. We do most of our evangelizing through the printed page, the public prints, the Volunteer matter, the Colporteur work, etc. Yet these are not differences, but adaptations of the same principles to our time.

The work done in Judea during the thirty-seven years following our Lord's crucifixion and closing with the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, was a harvesting work to that nation. During that time we may be sure every grain of "wheat" was separated from the chaff and gathered into the garner--the higher or Gospel dispensation--into the spirit-begotten condition. That Harvest extended beyond Palestine, but even then it always applied "to the Jew first," until A.D. 70.

A similar work, the Harvesting of this age, we [R4337 : page 58] understand has been in progress since 1878, and will terminate in 1914, with the beginning of a great time of trouble upon Christendom, corresponding to and antityping the trouble which destroyed the Jewish nation. The harvest work there had a radius of but a few hundred miles. The harvest of today extends all over the civilized world, a circuit of about ten thousand miles. Since the reapers are few, how necessary it is that the Lord should provide the extraordinary agencies which are now at our disposal for the circulation of the harvest message--for the gathering of the wheat. May we not well say that the Lord times the inventions of our day so as to provide for the necessity of this harvest work, that every grain of wheat the whole world around may be found and gathered into the garner of the high dispensation, the heavenly? We believe that the principle noted in our Golden Text is still applicable--that the Lord does not wish his consecrated people, when they come into the light of Present Truth, to congregate specially in special cities, States, etc., but rather wills that they be scattered abroad, so that everywhere the Truth shall be preached and that they shall have the inestimable privilege of proclaiming it, serving it, and thus being blessed and upbuilt themselves and prepared for a share in the glory of the Kingdom.

Dear brethren, he who was with and guided the early Church is with us with equal power. He who guided in that harvest time is guiding now, and will continue to guide his work to the end. We may have experience with similar characters to that of Judas, Alexander the coppersmith, Jannes and Jambres. But the Lord is able to make all these things work together for good to us and through them all to fulfil his gracious promises. He may permit persecutions, imprisonments or things corresponding on a different plane, but let us never doubt the presence and power of our Lord.

The glorious results will more than compensate the trials and difficulties.

"Faith can firmly trust him, come what may."

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