



CHINESE WHEELBARROW.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

A.D. 50.] LESSON XI. [Dec. 11.

THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL.

Acts 15. 12-29.] [Memory verses, 8-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.—Acts 15. 11.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God guides his people into a fuller understanding of the truth.

CIRCUMSTANCES.

Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, in Syria, after two or three years of missionary work in Asia Minor. They made their report to a great missionary meeting. At Antioch they remained a long time.—Acts 14. 24. It was during this abode that the difficulty arose with which to day's lesson is concerned.

THE GREAT QUESTION.

The great question was whether the Gentiles must not only believe in Jesus, but must become Jews, if they would be saved.

Find in this lesson—
That good people do not always think alike.
How to learn what we ought to do
How to treat those who differ from us.
What we must do to be saved.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

1. What great question arose in the Church? "Whether the Gentiles must become Jews in order to be saved." 2. What did they do about it? "They discussed it freely among themselves." 3. What next? "They asked the advice of the older Church at Jerusalem." 4. What was the decision as to salvation? "That no rite or ceremony was necessary to salvation, but our faith in Christ." 5. What should the Gentiles do? "They should refrain from sin, and from those things which prevented good Jews from uniting with them."

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

How did our Lord sum up the whole law?
In two great commandments of love to God and to man.

In what form did our Lord give us this summary?

In answer to the question of a scribe, he singled out two commandments given to Israel, and united them, saying: "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets;" and, "There is none other commandment greater than these."—Matthew 22. 40; Mark 12. 31.

ADVENTURES IN WESTERN CHINA.

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II.

The scene was becoming spirited. Some came rushing down the dangerous declivities, and cried this and that, and swearing like demons. Others pounced upon the boat. One sat plump upon the old rice bag and seized an oar, another got hold of the captain and hustled him about pretty lively. I plied more cold water to my head, sat back, fanned and watched operations. At last things brightened a little, a few hundreds of cash were paid out, and the screaming ceased. The word "start" was given. The boatmen were shoving off, when the yells were renewed. The oars were grasped and a man jumped upon the rice bag and attempted to drag it away. We were actually out in the open river and in the direst confusion, two fighting men aboard, dozens screaming from the shore, and a boat in hot pursuit, which in a few moments grappled our boat. Thus we floated and rowed under more volleys of oaths than any warship from bullets. My patience had been a little tried, but I had remained a quiet spectator up to this time. I advised the men who had boarded the boat to return, as my intentions were to proceed down the river.

They replied, "The trouble is with the captain, and not with you."

"Yes," I answered, "but it seriously troubles me. Settle up affairs at once."

We landed three miles below the city for a compromise. After an hour of wrangling upon shore and upon the boat, matters were compounded. The captain was to pay over to the different creditors four

thousand cash. An appeal was now made to me for three thousand cash, with the promise to pay back when we reached Ichang.

Experienced foreigners understand what "pay back" means, and seldom give with out a mental reservation, that so much has gone never to return. Yes, I would lend them the three thousand cash provided they would execute a paper giving me a mortgage upon the boat, which was done. The creditors seemed loath to leave the rice bag, even after the money stipulated had been paid over.

The only redeeming feature of our delay was an opportunity to visit a cool spring of water under the cliff near by, and take on board a goodly supply.

Away we went at six o'clock, happy and hopeful. Just before dusk we tied up for the night in a little inlet, above a small town. Upon the bank were a cornfield and a tobacco plantation. Ten o'clock found me safely stowed in my section of the boat, with my light clothes hung up orderly upon a bamboo at my right. Early the next morning we prepared for our journey. Where were my clothes? The sailor boy, a nice youth for whom I had taken quite a fancy, came from the tobacco field bringing my pants, minus by braces and keys—he had found them under a tobacco plant. Soon after my coat and braces were discovered the braces without the buckles. Fortunately the night thieves did not get my watch or any valuables. My clothes, no doubt, were tempting, but they might be a source of detection, so two native jackets belonging to my servant were substituted. The affair seemed in harmony with the previous day's experience, and I consoled myself with the thought that a bad beginning often has a good ending.

Our boat went down the current like a thing of life. The five oarsmen singing and screaming in turns, over on the alert for whirlpools and rocky points. The water was rising fast; clouds were gathering, and before we had made fifty miles, the rain came, and we tied up at a little village. The farmers were pulling up their corn which was planted along the river bank, and they seemed to me rather unreasonable, for they pulled up the rows twenty or thirty feet above the water. Little did I dream that within forty-eight hours the seething floods would not only reach that height, but forty feet higher. Near evening the sailors mustered sufficient courage to row to the city of Fu Chieu, not far distant, but nothing could tempt them to go farther.

It would be vain for me to attempt to describe my four days under a banyan tree, while the floods rushed and thundered past, boiled over, whirled sideways and backwards, filling every nook and crevice, uprooting trees, carrying away hill-sides, floating houses and wrecking boats. The suburbs of a dozen cities and towns were partially swept away, or more or less injured. On the last morning under the banyan tree I witnessed a novel scene. A boat anchored about ten paces from us was laden with fifty hogs and small pigs. The owners of the herd honoured me by landing the hogs and driving them to a cool shady place by the side of my boat. I have always taken an interest in "porkers," and not having much to do but watch the floods and read, I turned by attention to the interesting tricks of the Chinese hog. The following morning an ancient hog, one who had seen many hot summers, was driven from the boat, panting at a fearful rate. I began to fear that cholera or some other epidemic was breaking out among them in the crowded pen in the boat. Knives were brought and the ears were first lanced, then the mouth, then the tail, and the back was well rubbed. After a little there were more lancing and rubbing. The panting became more severe; the hog was dying. A quick consultation was held, and within twenty minutes the animal was strung to a tree. It was dressed in the orthodox fashion, blown up, well beaten and then carried away. "I don't want no more" Chinese pork.

On the fourth day there was an abatement of the floods, and the cornfields upon the low hill sides began to appear. The mark on the banyan tree, showing the highest point reached, was getting pretty well out of sight. Boats ventured to go down, but our men declared that it was dangerous, and that the other boats would

"tie up" around the corner. After musing down the whirling floods, the captain mustered up sufficient courage to give the word "go," and we went.

In a twinkling the inundated city was lost to view, and we rushed over the deadly rapid into the awful swirls which towered around our light craft like angry demons. When well over, the boatman took long breaths, and commented upon the other dangerous places to be passed. We came to an abrupt stop at four o'clock. It was possible to go farther." The little town near where we anchored looked badly damaged, but workmen were busy reconstructing flimsy houses. During the night the water fell ten feet, and we were, by day-light, almost out of the corn-fields, and our men, no doubt, missed the succulent ears which they had been in the habit of plucking from the boat's side. It was noon before I could put enough western courage into the timid fellows to venture into the "horrid place" a mile below, where they declared, many boats had been wrecked. When I rallied the captain upon his timidity, he would say, "I am not afraid of myself; I am of no account. My boat is only worth ten and a few strings of cash, but I am afraid of you and your baggage. You are t' important one. Ah, me! this miserable little boat!"

Time does not permit me to give a detailed account of my experiences in the "Wind Box" and "Wubhan Gorges." There is much risk in navigating the Upper Yang-tso in July and August, especially after such a flood as I have described.

What the jinrikisha is to Japan the wheelbarrow is to China—the most popular mode of conveyance. It requires two to ride, one to balance the other, unless there is a bundle or some sort of weight, as in the case of the one in which the gentleman is sitting so contentedly in the rear of the picture. These queer carriages are to be seen all over the streets of China, and are, as we have said, the most common mode of travel.

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