

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Second Quarter, 1902.

APRIL TO JUNE.

Lesson X. June 8. Acts 15:22-33.

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty where-
with Christ has made us free.—Gal. 5:1.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE TWO SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS EVENT. We have two accounts of this conference. One by Luke (Acts 15:1-35), and the other by Paul himself in his epistle to the Galatian churches (Gal. 2:1-10). Some critics find a difficulty in reconciling the two accounts, but the opinion is almost unanimous among conservative and radical critics alike, that the two accounts describe the same event (except Professor Ramsay). "The discrepancy is only apparent, and disappears on careful scrutiny of the Greek text." "I recognize in the language of Paul a lively picture from the interior of the same council whose external history is recorded in Acts 15."

II. THE TWO DIVISIONS OF THE CHURCH.—The church had been in existence for about twenty years.

It had extended over Palestine, Phoenicia, Damascus, Antioch, Cyprus, and South Galatia in Asia Minor.

It included Jews, proselytes, Grecianized Jews, and Gentiles.

The disciples were naturally divided into two classes: 1. The Christian Jews of all kinds, and the Gentile proselytes who had become Jews, accepting their ritual and laws and hopes.

2. The Gentile Christians, who accepted Jesus as their Saviour, but refused to submit to the peculiar rites of Jewish life.

III. THE QUESTION AT ISSUE.—The burning question was "whether the Gentiles must become Jewish proselytes, and submit to the Jewish ceremonial law in order to be saved."

IV. FREE DISCUSSION.—The discussion was very warm at Antioch. Both sides were sure they were right. Still, on all such questions, it is best to discuss and confer together in a Christian spirit, and with a desire to know the truth.

Not being able to settle the question among themselves, they wisely determined to send a strong delegation to the mother church, three hundred miles away.

The delegation consisted of the missionaries, Paul and Barnabas, and other leading men, among whom was Titus (Gal. 2:1), a Gentile Christian, who would be a specimen of the converts among the Gentiles. He was of Greek origin, perhaps a native of Antioch, was afterwards a companion of Paul in his missionary journeys, and to him was written one of Paul's epistles. He must have been a man of considerable power.

THE PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED.—Vs. 22-29. The decision was unanimous by not only the APOSTLES and ELDERs, but also by THE WHOLE CHURCH, who, vs. 25, were "come to" (not, ASSEMBLED WITH) ONE ACCORD, had arrived at a unanimous conclusion.

They sent a delegation and a letter. The letter stated clearly their decision; the delegation gave dignity and force to the letter, and confirmed the reports of Paul and Barnabas, so that there could be no possible feeling that the report was colored by their previous opinions. JUDAS SUR-NAMED (or called) BARABAS, son of

Sabas or Sabbas. In Acts 1:23 a Joseph Barabas is named as the alternate with Matthias as a candidate for the apostleship in place of Judas. This Judas Barabas may have been his brother, and hence one who had personally known Jesus. SILAS, probably a shortened form of Silvanus. He became Paul's companion in his next missionary journey (vs. 40).

23. GREETING, rejoice, hail, welcome, the usual Greek salutation. Joy be with you. Compare our "good-by" (good —(God) by —(be with you) and "fare well."

24. CERTAIN WHICH WENT OUT FROM US, and therefore for whom we seem to be in a measure responsible, and whose teachings we would now correct.

25. BELIEVED BARNABAS AND PAUL. Thus showing to the Antioch church in what high esteem the Jerusalem church held these men.

28. IT SEEMED GOOD TO THE HOLY GHOST, who, by what he had done for the Gentiles by apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit, showed as plainly as actions could speak, what the divine will was. The decision was not merely man's opinion, but was inspired by God. AND TO US who accepted the result thus inspired, and was heartily convinced that it was right. What could convince them ought to convince and satisfy the church everywhere. THESE NECESSARY THINGS, not necessarily as conditions of salvation, but necessary for right conduct toward the heathen, and necessary for the unity and mutual intercourse of Jews and Gentiles.

29. THAT YE ABSTAIN FROM. Here follow four particulars.

First Group. Abstain (1) FROM MEATS OFFERED TO IDOLS. (2) FROM FORNICATION.

The eating of meats offered to idols meant far more than merely eating at home meat sold in the markets that had been a part of the sacrifices to idols. The inspired framers of these primitive decrees well knew that "an idol was nothing in the world, and that there was none other God but one; but they knew, too, that the idol-worship of the first century of our era, the age in which they lived, poisoned the whole life of society in Greece, in Italy, in the East." Licentiousness "was associated with much of the current idol-worship of the day," which "glorified sexual vice with the halo of a sacred sanction." Lecky, in his History of European Morals, says that courtesans were the priestesses of the temple of Venus, and that many leading cities were made famous for the schools of vice which grew up under the shadow of the temple (chap. 5). See Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. 4.

The Second Group included (1) abstaining from meat offered to idols, so far as sanctioning idol worship; (2) refraining from eating the blood of animals; and (3) from eating things strangled, in each case whoever ate such meat must eat the blood of the animal. Blood was forbidden to the Jews by the Levitical law (Lev. 3:17; 17:10-14), because blood was the life, the sacred symbol of sacrifice, and of purification from sin. "Without the shedding of blood there was no remission" (Heb. 9:22). The blood of the sacrificed animal was the symbol pointing to the blood of Jesus shed on the cross for the remission of sin. But among the Gentiles it was, in various forms, a delicacy; they were "accustomed to drink blood mingled with wine at their sacrifices." Therefore, in churches composed of both Jews and Gentiles, social and brotherly intercourse would be impossible unless the latter abstained from it also.

These prohibitions were temporary, intended to meet the necessities of Christian intercourse at the time. But the principle of courtesy, of denying self for the good of others, of yielding the unessential to the weakness or even prejudices of others, —this is eternal. Finally, the Gentiles were requested to remember the poor at Jerusalem as they had already done. Thus they would prove their kindly feeling and the unity of love.

VI. THE RECEPTION OF THE DECISION AT ANTIOCH.—Vs. 30-33. The decision and the letter were given to a great assembly of the church at Antioch. 31. THEY REJOICED FOR THE CONSOLATION. Encouragement. The word "exhorted" in vs. 32 is from the same root. See First Quarter, Lesson VI. The report encouraged, strengthened, comforted them. Their consciences were now at rest, agreeing with their reason.

VII. SOME MODERN APPLICATIONS.—1. God guides by his Holy Spirit his children into the truth, through the needs of the times, through a clearer understanding of the Scriptures, and through free and loving discussion.

2. Missionaries can do the most good by returning every few years to visit the home church. The churches need to hear the report of their work from the actors themselves. The foreign workers need to come in contact with home influences,

to gain fresh impulses, to keep in harmony with church progress and methods. They need it for bodily health, as a preventative rather than a cure; but still more for mental and moral stimulus. "It is twice blessed. It bleaseth him that gives and him that takes."

3. Honest differences of opinion on important questions are sure to arise among good men, and in the best churches, when each party feels sure that he is right, and that his view is of vital importance to the kingdom of God. Seldom in the churches has there arisen a more important and more surpassingly difficult question than that which arose in the early church and which we have been studying. This fact and the fact that it was settled and the way in which it was settled are full of encouragement and instruction for us.

JOHN AND HIS RABBIS.

When one essays to address a company of bright boys and girls he needs to have his wits about him. This remark is ad-duced from the statement made in a London paper that at a school in Kent an in-spector, who was examining a class of children in arithmetic, met his Waterloo in the following rather amusing fashion:

"Now, John, suppose I gave you two rabbits and another kind friend gave you one more, how many would you have?"

John.—Four, sir.

Inspector.—No, my boy, two and one don't make four.

John (quickly).—Please, sir, I've got one old lop-eared un at home.

On the back of every door of knowledge that you open hangs the key to some other door.

Every increase of power means an increase of enjoyment. Fulton doubled to us the joys of the water, and the first airship will double to us the joys of the air.

Nature's Blessing

IS FOUND IN HEALTH, STRENGTH AND FREEDOM FROM PAIN.

This Gift is Meant for All—On It the Happiness and Usefulness of Life Depend—Without It Life is an Existence Hard to Endure.

Health is nature's choicest gift to man and should be carefully guarded. Ill health is a sure sign that the blood is either insufficient, watery or impure, for most of the diseases that afflict mankind are traceable to this cause. Every organ of the body requires rich, red blood to enable it to properly perform its life sustaining functions, and at the first intimation that nature gives that all is not well the blood should be cared for. Purgative medicines will not do this—it is a tonic that is needed, and Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have been proved, the world over, to surpass all other medicines in their tonic, strengthening and health-renewing qualities. From one end of the land to the other will be found grateful people who cheerfully acknowledge that they owe their good health to this great medicine. Among these is Mr. Elzar Robidoux, a prominent young man living at St. Jerome, Que. He says:—"For some years I was a great sufferer from dyspepsia. My appetite became irregular and everything I ate felt like a weight on my stomach. I tried several remedies and was under the care of doctors but to no avail and I grew worse as time went on. I became very weak, grew thin, suffered much from pains in the stomach and was frequently seized with dizziness. One day a friend told me of the case of a young girl who had suffered greatly from this trouble, but who, through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills had fully regained her health and strength, and strongly advised me to try these pills. I was so eager to find a cure that I acted on his advice and procured a supply. From the very first my condition improved and after using the pills for a couple of months I was fully restored to health, after having been a constant sufferer for four years. It is now over a year since I used the pills and in that time I have enjoyed the best of health. This I owe to that greatest of all medicines, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I shall always have a good word to say on their behalf."

Through their action on the blood and veins, these pills cure such diseases as rheumatism, sciatica, St. Vitus' dance, indigestion, kidney trouble, partial paralysis, etc. Be sure that you get the genuine with the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People" on every box. If your dealer does not keep them they will be sent postpaid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.



MILBURN'S HEART AND NERVE PILLS FOR WEAK PEOPLE.

AND THOSE TROUBLED WITH

Palpitation, Throbbing or Irregular Beating of the Heart, Dizziness, Shortness of Breath, Distress after Exertion, Smothering Feeling, Spasms or Pain through the Breast and Heart, Morbid Condition of the Mind, Partial Paralysis, Sleeplessness, Nervousness, Anemia, General Debility, After-Effects of Grippe, Loss of Appetite, etc.

Remember Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills cure the worst cases after other remedies fail.

Laxa-Liver Pills cure Constipation.

The TOILET IS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT POND'S EXTRACT

RELIEVES CHAFING, ITCHING OR IRRITATION. COOLS, COMFORTS AND HEALS THE SKIN, AFTER SHAVING.

Avoid dangerous, irritating Witch Hazel preparations represented to be "the same as" Pond's Extract, which easily sores and often contain "wood alcohol," a deadly poison.

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Carpenters' Kidneys.

Carpentering is not an easy trade. The constant reaching up and down, the lifting and stooping over are all severe strains on the kidneys. No wonder a carpenter examined, recently, that every time he drove a nail it seemed as though he was piercing his own back. He uses

DOAN'S Kidney Pills

now on the first sign of Backache and is able to follow his trade with comfort and profit.

"I have had kidney and urinary troubles for more than three years with severe pain in the small of my back and in both sides. I could not stoop without difficulty, and I had severe neuralgic pain in both temples. Seeing the advertisement of Doan's Kidney Pills, I got a box. They have given me quick relief, removing the pain from the back and sides, and banishing the neuralgic pains from my head. The urinary difficulty is now entirely gone. I feel fresh and vigorous in the mornings, and am much stronger in every way since taking these pills." CLARENCE E. SEEDS, Carpenter and Builder, Trenton, Ont.

FAVORABLY KNOWN SINCE 1826. **DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS** HAVE FURNISHED 25,000 CURES. CHURCH, SCHOOL & OTHER PURCHASERS. MCKENZIE & CO. GENUINE WEST-TRON'S BELL-METAL. QUINER, 27% CATALOGUE PRICES FREE.

TALKS OUT.

Doctor Talks About Food.

It is often the case that doctors themselves drift into bad habits of food and drink although they know better, but doctors are human you know like the rest of us, but when they get into trouble they generally know better how to get out of it, and the "food route," is a common one among them.

Dr. H. Barber of Laurel, Ind., concluded that coffee and badly selected food was the cause of his stomach trouble and his loss of weight from 184 pounds to 153 pounds with nerves impaired and general nervous break down.

He did not give coffee up at once but began the use of Grape-Nuts and says, "Within a month I could see a wonderful change had taken place due to the use of the new food. I decided to give up coffee and use Postum in its place. So regularly for a time I have been on a breakfast made up of Grape-Nuts, a little Graham bread, and Postum Food Coffee. My weight has increased to 174 pounds, my stomach trouble has entirely gone and my mind is clear and vigorous as ever. Wishing you every success I beg to assure you of my warm appreciation of Grape-Nuts and Postum."