

THE APOSTLES TURNING TO THE GEN-

Nov. 27. TILES. A.D. 46.
Lesson, Acts 13 : 44-44 : 7. Golden Text Acts 13 : 47.
Memory vs. 46-48. Catechism Q. 105.

The story of this first missionary journey is a thrilling one. Sent forth from Antioch in Syria with the prayers of the Church, traversing Cyprus from end to end, more than 100 miles, sailing north, landing in Asia Minor and reaching Antioch in Pisidia, preached there in the synagogues to an interested gathering, who asked them to preach again the following Sabbath. Through the week they visited and taught privately. News of the wondrous doctrine spread, some were interested, some curious, some enraged; and so from one motive and another "the next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God." Picture to yourself the scene.

I. Jewish opposition at Antioch, vs. 44-45.

II. The Apostles turn to the Gentiles, vs. 46-50.

III. The same fight at Iconium, vs. 1-5.

IV. At other cities, vs. 6-7.

I. vs. 44-45. *Next Sabbath*—The second Sabbath they were there. *Whole city*—What a grand opportunity for preaching, like our missionaries at the Chinese fairs, with the exception that the people of Antioch came purposely to hear. *With jealousy*—The following reasons have been given for this jealousy: 1. The popularity of the two strangers which threw the Jews into the background. 2. The teaching seemed to overthrow their teaching. 3. The differences between their own interpretation of Scripture and that of the Apostles. 4. The new doctrine admitted the Gentiles to the same high privileges as the Jews. 5. The fact of so many heathen crowding into and around the synagogue. *Blasphemed*—The blasphemy, would be hard, derisive sayings regarding Jesus of Nazareth as an imposter and malefactor.

II. *Boldly*—The opposition did not daunt them. *Necessary*—It was God's purpose and his command. *Judge yourselves*—Their loss of eternal life was their own fault. So it will be with all who are offered life and reject it. *We turn*—It is an awful thing when the gospel, rejected, turns away from men. *Commanded*—They were not turning away on their own responsibility. *Uttermost*—The gospel is for all ages, all conditions, all classes, all times. *Glad*—What filled the Jews with jealousy made them glad. Heaven's blessings were for them also. *Devout women*—They would represent to these women that religion was in danger and would readily stir them up. *Chief men*—These would rather please their Jewish fellow citizens than two wandering preachers. *Persecution*—The argument of false religions. *Dust*—As commanded, Matt. 10 : 14. Not in anger, but to show that they shook off all responsibility, that it must rest with those who rejected them. *Disciples*—Christians at Antioch. *Holy Ghost*—This is the source of their joy, and makes it deep and lasting. What a contrast to the minds of their persecutors.

III. vs. 1-5. *Iconium*—60 miles from Antioch. Here the same scene was repeated.

1. Those who reject Christ prove themselves unworthy of everlasting life.

2. God never turns from men unless they reject Him. How terrible the guilt and danger of rejecting the gospel.

3. When God's Spirit fills the heart, nothing can take away the peace and joy of that heart.

4. We may expect opposition when trying to spread the gospel.

5. The gospel always triumphs in the end.

WORK AMONG THE GENTILES.

Dec. 4. A.D. 47.
Lesson, Acts 14 : 8-22. Golden Text, Matt. 12 : 21.
Memory vs. Catechism Q. 106.

I. The lame man healed, vs. 8-10.

II. The Apostles worshipped, vs. 11-13.

III. The multitude taught, vs. 14-18.

IV. The Apostles persecuted, v. 19.

V. Former fields revisited, vs. 20-21.

I. *Sat*—Probably in the market place where his friends brought him day by day to beg. See Acts iii : 2-8. *Never walked*—Two things would make the miracle notable, (1) he had always been lame, (2) he would be widely known as from childhood a beggar. *Cripple*—From an old word "creep," one who can only creep. *Seeing he had faith*—His glad, eager look would shew to Paul that he had received his message about Christ, and was in a fit state of mind to be used as a sign to the people. "To do this required great faith in Paul, and great faith in the lame man."

II. *Speech of Lycaonia*—Paul had spoken in Greek which was well-known. In their excitement they cry out in their native tongue; as a body of highlanders, who might understand English, would, under strong excitement, use unconsciously the Gaelic. *Gods*—The old heathen idea of the unseen world was fashioned after this world. The gods were but men with greater powers but like passions, and came down from their fabled abodes in Mt. Olympus or elsewhere, and visited men sometimes in human, sometimes in animal shape. *Jupiter*—The king of the gods, probably, because he was larger of stature than Paul. *Mercury*—The messenger or spokesman of the gods. *Oxen*—To sacrifice. *Garlands*—To wreath the sacrifices.

III. *Rent*—In astonishment and disapproval. *Men*—It is human nature to love honor and praise, but the apostles effaced themselves. *Vanities*—We come not to receive such worship as this but to turn you away from all such to the Living God. *All nations*—He chose one nation and left the others to their idols. *Witness*—His goodness to them left them without excuse in worshipping their idols.

IV. v. 19. *Jews*—From both the cities whence the Apostles had recently been driven. How determined to stop their preaching. *Persuaded*—Probably told the multitudes that these men were apostles, that they had been driven from Antioch and Iconium for bad conduct, and that the pretended miracle was some feat of jugglery. *Stoned*—How fickle the mob. As with Christ it was to-day, "Hosanna," to-morrow, "Crucify." See 2 Cor. 11 : 25. Gal. vi : 17. Paul himself had once taken part in the stoning of Stephen. How it would all come back to him now. *Dragged*—To free the city of so hateful a corpse. They did not take the trouble to bury it, but cast it out as refuse.

V. vs. 20-21. *Rose up*—He may have been merely stunned, and now recovered from unconsciousness, but there can be little doubt that the miraculous was in it. *Entered*—What a stir it would make among both friends and enemies. Some would feel that he was indeed a god, or as Herod did to John the Baptist. *Morrow*—So soon. *To Derbe*—Their enemies must have been stricken dumb by their boldness. Back through the different cities to Antioch in Pisidia. *Tribulation*—They could speak from experience. Kingdom of God. That more than compensates for all.

1. Faith necessary to blessing.

2. The crowd cheers apparent success.

3. True humility seeks not power for self.

4. How changeable the world's favor.