

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Second Quarter, 1902.

APRIL TO JUNE.

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH IN SYRIA.

Lesson V. May 4. Acts 11:19-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.—Acts 11:21.

EXPLANATORY.

THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH.—V. 19-21. Antioch was so named by Seleucus Nikator, Alexander's greatest general, who built the city, 300 B. C., in memory of his father Antiochus. It was situated in Western Syria on the river Orontes, sixteen miles from its mouth, as London is situated on the Thames. It was near the northeastern angle of the Mediterranean, and about three hundred miles north of Jerusalem.

Formation of the church at Antioch. 19. NOW THEY WHICH WERE SCATTERED ABROAD. The thread of the narrative returns to the persecution described in Acts 8:1-4, in order to show a new line of influence proceeding from that event. The authorities tried to blow out the gospel fire kindled by the Holy Spirit, but it only made it burn the brighter. They lashed the fire, but it only sent the sparks over the world. AS FAR AS PHENICIA, PHOENICIA, the strip of coast between the Mediterranean and the mountains of Lebanon, extending one hundred and twenty miles from a point a little below Tyre, northward to Beirut, from which, in the autumn of 1895, a railroad was opened to Damascus. CYPRUS, a large island in the Mediterranean, sixty miles from the Palestine coast. AND ANTIOCH, the most northern large city on the coast. PREACHING THE WORD TO . . . JEWS ONLY. According to the practice and feelings of the Jewish Christians when they left Jerusalem. The new impulse broadening the church had not yet reached them (Acts 1:8). They began at Jerusalem, but had not yet begun to practice the rest of Christ's command.

10. AND, rather "But." Contrasting these with those who confined their labors to the Jews in vs. 19. MEN OF CYPRUS. The island opposite Tarsus, which Paul had been making the headquarters of his preaching for several years. AND CYRENE. On the coast of Africa. These were Greek-speaking Jews, who, having lived abroad, were not so intensely Jewish as those who had always lived in Jerusalem, and they had been under the influence of the broad-minded Paul. SPEAK UNTO THE GREEKS. The best manuscripts have "Greeks" as in R. V., and this clearly the correct reading. The New Testament uses "Hellenistic" (Grecians) to mean those Jews who had been abroad and spoke Greek; but "Hellenes" (Greeks), for Gentiles who did not become Jewish proselytes. The contrast and the new departure lies in the fact that before this the disciples sought to convert to Jesus only the Jews (including the Grecians who were Jews), but now they began to preach to the Gentiles as such.

21. THE HAND (the symbol of power and of work) OF THE LORD. The hand of the church. Thus A GREAT NUMBER BELIEVED. The Lord proved by his power in touching their hearts and renewing their lives that he wanted these people in his church. They were received apparently without contention or opposition, as the

A BURNING BLACKSMITH.

Changed Food and Put Out the Fire.

Even sturdy blacksmiths sometimes discover that, notwithstanding their daily exercise and resulting good health, if their food is not well selected trouble will follow, but in some cases a change of food to the right sort will quickly relieve the sufferer, for generally such active men have fine constitutions and can, with a little change of diet, easily rid themselves of the disease.

I. E. Overdorf, Vilas, Penn., a blacksmith, says, "Two months ago I got down so bad with stomach trouble that I had to quit my business. About ten o'clock each morning I was attacked by burning pains in the stomach, so bad I was unable to work.

Our groceryman insisted upon my changing breakfasts and using Grape-Nuts Breakfast Food instead of the ordinary breakfast of meat, potatoes, etc. So I tried and at once began to mend. The new food agreed with my stomach perfectly and the pains all ceased. I kept getting better and better every day and now I am able to follow my business better than before in years. I am a thousand times obliged to the makers of Grape-Nuts for the great benefits the food has given."

logical result of their believing and the divine favor of the plan.

Thus was founded the "first Gentile church." The broadening of the church for which previous events had been preparing had now actually begun. This church grew to be a center of religious power and influence next to Jerusalem, and in some respect far greater.

II. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH.—V. 22-24. 22. THEN THINGS (the report concerning) THESE THINGS CAME UNTO . . . JERUSALEM. They were doubtless received with joy mingled with fears as to what the outcome might be. Some would be prepared for the new regime by the conversion of Cornelius and Peter's vision; others would see in it impending disaster, and the ruin of the new religion.

"A wise movement." Then the church at Jerusalem did a very wise and right thing: THEY SENT FORTH BARNABAS (1) to learn the exact truths about the reports. (2) To prevent any abuses or discord from arising between the Jewish and Gentile converts, of which the sequel shows the real danger (Acts 15:1, 25). The difficult question of calling together could not but arise. (3) To encourage the new disciples in everything that was good. (4) To warn them against error, if error there was. AS FAR AS ANTIOCH. Implying that he visited other churches on the way.

"What he saw." 23. WHEN HE CAME AND HAD SEEN THE GRACE OF GOD as shown in the converts, their changed character, their numbers, their good deeds.

"How he felt." WAS OLD. One test of character is what a person rejoices in.

"What he did." EXHORTED THEM ALL. THAT WITH PURPOSE OF HEART. With the will and affections, the whole choice of the soul. THEY WOULD CLEAVE UNTO THE LORD. The only way to stand firm and strong amid the many temptations of life, and to hold on to the end, is by cleaving to the Lord, as the branch to the vine.

24. FOR HE WAS A GOOD MAN. Not merely honest and upright, but generous, kindly, loving, conciliating. This was shown in his joy that Gentiles were converted as well as Jews, and through others as well as himself. FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST. He lived in the Spirit, and was endowed with power from the Spirit. AND OF FAITH. Perfect trust in the Lord, perfect trust that Jesus was the Messiah; perfect devotion to his cause. He preached what he most heartily believed. AND MUCH PEOPLE WERE ADDED UNTO THE LORD. Through the labors of such a good man. All his exhortations had the power of a good man behind them.

III. PAUL COMES TO THE ASSISTANCE OF THE ANTIOCH CHURCH.—V. 25, 26. 25. THEN DEPARTED BARNABAS. The great success of Barnabas brought more work than he could do alone, more open doors than he could enter, more opportunities than he could use. The fields were white to the harvest, and the laborers were few. TO TARSUS, FOR TO SEEK SAUL. Luke in c. 30 mentions that Saul was sent away to Tarsus; and he now takes up the thread from that point. . . . He implies that the reader must understand Tarsus to have been Saul's headquarters during the intervening period.

26. A WHOLE YEAR THEY (Barnabas and Paul) ASSEMBLED THEMSELVES WITH THE CHURCH (at their places of worship) AND TAUGHT. The young church, just delivered from heathenism, had especial need of instruction.

"Christians." THE DISCIPLES WERE CALLED CHRISTIANS FIRST IN ANTIOCH. Not by the Jews who would not recognize Jesus as Christ, that is, Messiah, but by the people outside the disciples. So "Methodist" and "Puritan" were names first given in ridicule, and then resented by those who bore them.

IV. THE FAMINE AND THE RELIEF FUND.—V. 27-30. 27. IN THESE DAYS. While the church was being founded in Antioch. CAME PROPHETS. Those speaking forth God's message.

28. A GREAT FAMINE. Nothing is known about him, beyond what is told here, and a symbolic prophecy some years later concerning Paul (Acts 21:10). GREAT DEARTH (famine) THROUGHOUT ALL THE WORLD. The term refers to the inhabited world of the Roman Empire. "We have ample evidence as to a widespread dearth over various parts of the Roman Empire, to which Suetonius, Dion Cassius, Tacitus, and Josephus all bear witness. In the reign of Claudius; and in no other reign do we find such varied allusions to periodical famines."

29. THE DISCIPLES . . . DETERMINED TO SEND RELIEF. The prophecy of the famine was made in order to give the disciples time to collect money and food in advance of the need. They believed the prophet, and proceeded to prepare the relief.

30. WHICH ALSO THEY DID, after the famine had begun, and after the persecution by Herod; and Herod's death in A. D. 44. Most of the early Christians at Jerus-

alem were probably poor; and the persecution would be most likely to drive away those best able to support themselves. BY THE HANDS OF BARNABAS AND SAUL. This was Paul's second visit to Jerusalem. Professor Ramsay regards it as the same visit as that described in Gal 2:1-10. McGiffert regards this visit as the same one described in Acts 15 as well as in Gal. 2.

KEEP AT WORK.

(Chauncey M. Depew.)

Shakespeare died at fifty, and I am sixty-eight, with the consciousness of firmer health, fuller powers and keener enjoyment of life than ever before. I believe that Shakespeare died at fifty because he retired from business. He had demonstrated for the glory of the human intellect that "myriad minds" could be housed in one brain, and then retired to Stratford to live at ease. I have observed that health and longevity are indissolubly connected with work. Work furnishes the zone for the lungs, the appetite and the digestion which support vigorous life; the occupation which keeps the brain active and expansive. When a man from fifty upward retires, as he says, for rest, his intellectual powers become torpid, his circulation sluggish, his stomach a burden and his office his home. Bismarck, at seventy-five, ruling Germany; Thiers, at eighty, France; Gladstone, at eighty-two, a power in Great Britain; Simon Cameron, at ninety, taking his first outing abroad and enjoying all the fatigues as well as the delights of a London season, illustrated recuperative powers of hard work. Such men as these never cease to exercise to the full extent of their abilities their faculties in their chosen lines.

A Talk With Girls.

HOW TO OBTAIN BRIGHT EYES AND ROSY CHEEKS.

Pale, Anæmic and Easily Tired Girls Often Fall a Prey to Consumption.

In young girls we look for abundant health and strength, rosy cheeks, bright eyes, firm, plump flesh and constant cheerfulness. How often, however, we meet young girls who seem prematurely old, feeble, pale, listless, thin and irritable. These abnormal and dangerous conditions are due to a general weakness of the blood and should be cured just as promptly as possible or the whole life of the patient will be ruined, if, indeed, decline and consumption do not speedily follow. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People are the natural, logical and sure cure for weak girls. These Pills make rich, red blood with every dose. They strengthen the nerves, act upon the whole system and bring health, strength and happiness to those who use them.

Mrs. Hiram Rinkler, South Pelham township, Welland county, Ont., says:—"It is with pleasure that I give this tribute to the health-restoring virtues of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. When my daughter, Lena, began the use of your medicine she was in a most wretched condition. In fact, we were seriously alarmed lest she might not recover. The symptoms were a feeling of languor and weakness, gradually growing worse. She became pale, lost flesh, had little or no appetite and was apparently going into a decline. Finally the trouble became complicated with a persistent sore throat, which gave her great difficulty in swallowing. She was placed under the care of a doctor who said her blood was poor and watery, and her whole system badly run down. The doctor's treatment did not help her much, and then acting on the advice of a neighbor I began to give her Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. The confidence with which this medicine was urged upon us was not misplaced, as I soon noticed a distinct improvement in my daughter's condition. The use of the pills for some weeks completely restored her, and from that time she has been a cheerful light-hearted girl, the very picture of health."

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INDIGESTION CONQUERED BY K.D.C.

IT RESTORES THE STOMACH TO HEALTHY ACTION AND TONES WHOLE SYSTEM.

A lady who knew Mrs. Cleveland, quite well met her at the Grand Central Station in New York, recently, fairly laden down with parcels. "You look like a real old-fashioned Santa Claus," she said to Mrs. Cleveland. "Oh, no, not quite that," was the reply. "for I have no toys in my parcels; they are filled with fruit, that I am taking out to where I am staying, because they are very fond of these particular things, and they can't be had out there." When Mrs. Cleveland left the train her friend thought that she would give pleasure to the brakeman by telling him that he had "entertained an angel unaware." So she said, "Did you see that lady on the platform with all those parcels?" "Yes," said he, "what of her?" "That's Mrs. Cleveland." The man refused to believe her. He could not believe that the wife of the President, almost struggling with parcels, would be travelling alone in an ordinary day coach. Such simple democracy passed his belief. —Ladies' Home Journal.