

"CAN WE AFFORD IT?"

BY ALICE DELANO.

How often, in the "privy council" of homo, is this question passed from father to mother, as the case in hand is turned over and viewed from different standpoints.

Now, while retrenchment is the order of the day, while wealthy corporations think it not beneath their dignity to practice the humble virtue of economy, it may not be vain to offer suggestions to that most perfect of all societies, the family. As is the family, so is the nation. The peasant household of France can always lay away the wee bit of gold—and now behold undaunted France step forth with bags of treasure and appease the awful god, Debt, before his giant hand can touch her fair land.

The question is not, "Shall we economize?" but, "How may it be done wisely and well?"

I have known a mother to deny herself the lively chintz with which to make a lounge covering, and daily to asp her children's tempers by a broken door-latch or very lame lamp. Yet these same children had their Sunday sashes, and the young misses rejoiced in "three buttoned" kids. Good woman, we have one fault to find with you. You do not put a sufficiently high estimate on your "vocation" as housekeeper and home-maker. Your table groans with good things—you might easily save enough (with detriment to no one) to correct all those aggravations about your little domicile. Oh! that you would duly appreciate and prize nerve-material and guard it accordingly!

It is misplaced economy against which we inveigh. That which ministers to the home-feeling, especially that which combines use with beauty, should be the last on which to lay the un pitying hand of retrenchment. Where shall we draw the dividing line between necessity and indulgence? Shall we spend money for our Lucy to take music, and will it be wise to let Harry take elocution? These and similar questions are fruitful themes at many firesides, and various indeed are the motions that contribute to the settlement of such vexed questions.

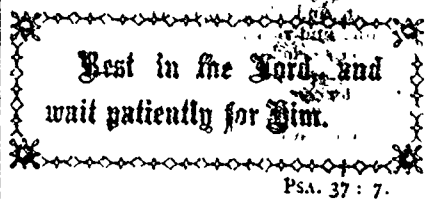
A talent for the fine arts, or any one of them, should be developed, even though it call for some sacrifice. A talent—that is what we mean. Not all are designed by nature to sing like the nightingale, or brilliantly entertain others in any way. We do not say that such study is ever inadvisable to those who can well afford it. Any branch of science or art cannot fail to be a discipline to the mind; but we are writing for the benefit of the "unrich," we will say, for people do not like to be called poor.

It is a swift and sure thing to teach those who have talent, therefore it is more economical, strictly considered, for such persons to pursue those studies than for others. Cherish the beginnings of talent in those who possess it. Some men spend half their lives in an effort to discover the "specialty" for which nature intended them. We can but reflect that, if the guardians of their young days had had more regard for the "eternal fitness of things," there would be less to mourn over in the way of misplaced economy and wasted time.

THE LEGEND OF THE GANGES.

The Ganges is considered sacred because it is said not to have its source on earth, but to descend from happier regions above, and to be the heavenly daughter of Himavat, or Himalaya. How it came to flow from heaven, they say, was this—In Ayodhya, or Oude, as it is now called, there was once a great king, named Sagara, who had two wives, but no children. He wished very much to have sons, and at last the pitying gods sent two sons to one wife, and sixty thousand to the other. But Sagara soon lost them all. Wishing, one day, to honor one of the gods, he resolved on offering one of the finest of his horses as a sacrifice, but a huge serpent came and carried off the intended victim to the bad regions below, and Sagara sent his sixty thousand sons to recover it. Down, and down, and down, they digged and digged, terrifying all creation, till they came to the place where the horse was. The animal was quietly grazing; but for attempting to carry it off, the sixty thousand princes were reduced to ashes by Vishnoo, who was keeper of the horse. As the princes did not return, Ansumat, the grandson and heir of Sagara, was sent in search of them. On discovering their fate, he thought that if he could only pour some sacred water on their ashes, their souls would rise to heaven. He was told, however, by a bird of Vishnoo, that no earthly water could prevail, and that he must procure the water of the Ganga from heaven. Sagara and Ansumat, and their successors for thousands and thousands of years, lived austere lives, and besought the gods that the river might flow down, till at last Brahma consent-

ed, on condition that the god Siva would allow the water to fall on his head, the earth being too weak to receive it. After many entreaties Siva angrily consented; the Ganga descended on the head of the god; and washing the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of Sagara, raised their souls to heaven.—From "Fairy Folk" for February.



SCHOLARS' NOTES

THIRD QUARTER.

LESSON I

July 1, 1877.—Acts 13: 1-13.

PAUL IN CYPRUS.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."—Acts 13: 12.

HOME STUDIES.—Mt.—Matt. 10: 1-15. The Twelve Commissioned. L.—Luke 10: 1-20. The Seventy Sent Forth. W.—Matt. 23: 11-20. The Apostolic Commission. Th.—Acts 11: 19-30. The Gospel at Antioch. F.—Acts 13: 1-13. The First Foreign Mission. Sa.—Isaiah 60: 1-12. The Conversion of the Gentiles. R.—Pa. 72: 1-20. Christ's Universal Kingdom Predicted.

INTRODUCTORY.

We return to our studies in the Acts of the Apostles. In the first twelve chapters we were occupied with the history of the planting and extension of the Christian church among the Jews. This involved, as leading events, the rapid growth of the church in Jerusalem, great persecution, the death of Stephen, the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria, the conversion of Paul, the opening of the door to the Gentiles, and the imprisonment and miraculous release of Peter. We now come to the history of the great movement to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles.

MEANING OF THE TEXT.

Church at Antioch. Probably organized, certainly largely increased, by Barnabas. Ch. 11: 20-24. Simon called Niger, to distinguish him from Simon called Peter, Cyrene, a province of Northern Africa. Herod, the one who beheaded John the Baptist. He was the son of Herod the Great, and uncle of the Herod of ch. 12. As they ministered, &c., engaged in service. The Holy Ghost said.—Possibly audible to all. Separate, &c., not apart unto me for special service. Laid hands on them.—A designation and commitment to a specific work. Antioch.—Below Antioch on the seacoast, Cyprus.—An island off the coast of Solyma.—At the east end of the lake of Cyprus. John, whose surname was Mark. Ch. 12: 12. Nearly related to Barnabas (Col. 4: 10), and author of the second Gospel. To their minister, &c., as their assistants in some service. When they had gone through the city.—Probably preaching as they went, when opportunity offered. Paphos.—A city on the western coast of Cyprus. They joined to &c. fell upon—met with. Berjes.—A Hebrew name of Joshua, a Jewish name, falsely assuming special communications to the other world. The deputy.—An officer under the Roman government. Prætor, &c., in the sense of being thoughtful, sensible. Withstood, &c., opposed. From the faith, &c., from the truth. Who also is called Paul.—From this time onward, as if to mark the divine recognition of his special mission to the Gentiles, here begins. Filled with the Holy Ghost.—Hence putting it past all doubt that the following denunciation was not but of mere human anger but a divine judgment upon the scribe. Full of all subtilty, &c., crafty, mischievous, to an intense degree—led through and through; devilish, opposed to all good. To pervert the right ways of the Lord, &c. to make the straight seem crooked, the truth a lie. God's right ways of communication with men, by means changed into the false ways of divination and magic. The head, &c., the power of the Lord.—Not of man. To upon them.—For punishment. For a season.—Literally "ill a time." How long is mere conjecture. And what the effect of the blindness was is also mere conjecture. A mist and darkness. Either denoting cause and effect, or a gradual loss of sight—first dimness, and then total blindness in either case the blindness was total. He could not see the truth. The deputy believed.—Whether savingly or not it is impossible certainly to determine. But the clause being associated with the darkness, would not indicate a spiritual impression and conversion. He was struck with wonder, and not at the teaching, but at teaching attended by such a marvel. Luceat, &c., go to sea, called. John departing returned to Jerusalem.—It is idle to speculate on the reason for this. But manifestly it was for some reason that did not carry Paul's approving judgment. Ch. 13: 38.

CENTRAL THOUGHTS.

Offering the gospel to the heathen is the work of God. [This is a grand missionary lesson. It is exceptional in the direct divine sanction it gives to the work among the heathen. It ought to be so used as to silence all evil and to dissipate all doubts concerning the duty of those who are in the light of the gospel to the heathen nations that still sit in darkness.] I. The Holy Ghost originated the first foreign mission. It is here made plain (v. 2) that the work of extending the gospel to the Gentile world was directly of God, and not a matter of human judgment in view of general divine directions and promises. It was not left to inference either as to the time of its prosecution or of the agents to prosecute it. For. II. The Holy Ghost chose for this foreign mission words

the very choicest of the preachers and teachers of the then existing church, v. 2. Barnabas was already eminent as a son of consolation (ch. 4: 36), gifted of God and successful (Ch. 11: 22-24). Saul was scholarly, profound, argumentative, with a reputation already established for boldness, power and success, at Damascus, Jerusalem, and Antioch. Ch. 9: 27-29; 11: 26, 30.

Practical Lessons.—I. The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. He who has no interest in the work of foreign missions is not in sympathy with the Holy Ghost. v. 2.

2. We need in our own country can ever justify the neglect of missions abroad, where God and without hope, there was a vast work still undone in Syria; the gospel had been preached only a little while, a good degree of success was attending it; Syria was an important centre; but this only in the history of the Church, the most able and the most successful of her agents forth of laborers were called by the Holy Ghost and sent forth to other lands. This is God's unchangeable testimony that he would have his Church, no matter what the circumstances of need at home, active in every part of the world, in giving the gospel to the heathen and perishing nations that know it not.

III. The Holy Spirit works through the Church. v. 3. Direct divine agency would not dispense with human agency in securing men. Paul and Barnabas were set apart and sent forth by the Church (v. 3), and yet by the Holy Ghost, v. 4.

Lesson.—God is not going to convert the heathen without human instrumentality. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Rom. 10: 14.

IV. In the first field of foreign effort the Holy Ghost proved more than a match for the powers of darkness. vs. 8-11. An apostate Jew stood as a child of the devil to resist the progress of the truth in a Gentile heart. This sorcerer not only sought to turn the deputy from the faith (v. 8), but to pervert the truth itself, v. 10. Instead, however, of turning the edge of the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, that sword of the Spirit went cleaving through this sorcerer's refuge of lies, and proved "a discomer of the thoughts and intents of his heart." Heb. 3: 13. The bitter was bitter. In seeking to blind another he himself was blinded.

Lesson.—The Church of Christ may expect victory on any heathen field, if she go forth full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. God will surely continue to crown with signal success the work as himself began. The missionary may fight the good fight, God single-handed, against the false systems of the pagan world, and the Holy Ghost will make that word mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of the heathen.

LESSON II

July 8, 1877.—Acts 13: 26-41.

PAUL AT ANTIOCH.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And we declare unto you glad tidings."—Acts 13: 32.

HOME STUDIES.—M.—Acts 13: 14-25. Paul in the Synagogue. T.—Acts 13: 26-41. Prophecy Fulfilled. W.—Pa. 2: 1-13. The People Warned. Th.—1 Cor. 1: 18-31. Christ our Righteousness. F.—Rom. 8: 1-11. Christ Free from the Law. Sa.—Gal. 1: 24. Christ the Only Way. R.—Pa. 32: 1-11. The Blessings of Pardon.

INTRODUCTORY.

From Paphos, Paul and Barnabas passed directly north to Antioch in Pisidia, a journey of about ninety miles. It was a rough, dangerous, mountainous way, and here, doubtless, they experienced some of those "perils" which Paul speaks of in 2 Cor. 11: 26. This Antioch is of distinguished from the Antioch of Syria, where Paul and Barnabas had already labored. They entered into the Synagogue on the Sabbath, and were invited to speak. Paul's address in response is especially noteworthy as bringing out distinctly the great doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. After the manner of the Jews, Paul began with a reference to the historic record of the Jews. By a rapid sketch he brought his hearers from the captivity in Egypt down, through David to Christ, where the present lesson begins.

MEANING OF THE TEXT.

Children of the stock of Abraham, &c., Jews by birth. Whosoever among you fears God, &c., Gentiles who had renounced their idolatry and accepted the God of the Jews. The word of this salvation.—The tidings of this way of salvation through Christ. Knew him not, &c., Jews. They knew not his real character as the Messiah. Nor the voice of the prophets.—The Jews mistook the meaning of their own Scriptures (2 Cor. 3: 14), and so in crucifying Christ they unconsciously fulfilled what had been predicted by the prophets concerning him. Isa. 53: Pa. 23, 30. No acres of death, &c., no ground upon which they could justly condemn him. Matt. 27: 24; Luke 23: 32. They took him down.—This was really done by the friends of Christ, but as it was with Pilate's sanction (John 19: 38), and as the tomb was sealed and a watch set by the Pharisees and Pilate (Matt. 27: 62-66), the whole transaction is comprehensively ascribed to Christ's enemies. He was seen many days.—The risen Christ throughout forty days gave "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1: 3) of his resurrection, and scores of witnesses (1 Cor. 15: 5-7) testified of these to the Jews in Palestine. And we declare, &c., we, Paul and Barnabas, bring you this glad news of a fulfilled promise—the great promise of a Messiah so frequently given in the Old Testament. In that he hath raised up Jesus, &c., from the dead. The resurrection is the growing proof of Christ's messiahship. Rom. 1: 4. At no period of Christ's life was there such signal divine testimony borne to his claim of divinity, as when God raised him from the dead. No more to return to corruption, &c., never to die again. This made Christ's resurrection unlike all others that had preceded it, and in this sense he was the first born or begotten from the dead, &c., to immortality. The sure mercies.—The things invariably pledged. Among these was the perpetual possession of the throne (2 Sam. 7: 13, Isa. 9: 7), which could only be true as Christ should live and reign forever. For David, &c.—David was mortal. Like other men he served his generation and died. He was laid (literally "added"), unto his fathers and saw corruption. Hence he could not be the subject of his own prophecy in Ps. 16: 10. But Christ, whom God raised from the dead, saw no corruption, and so answers to the prophecy through which he came.—This same Jesus who is proved to be the Son of God

with power by his resurrection. By him . . . by the law. —Literally, "in him . . . in the law," &c., in union with him . . . in union with the law—through him . . . through the law, as grounds of justification. Justified, &c., freed from the condemnation of our sins, so that we are exempt from their punishment forever, and accepted of God as righteous. The true sense of the passage is, To every one believing, &c., accepting Jesus as a Saviour and trusting in him alone for salvation, the remission of all sins is secured in Christ, for which sins he could not possibly secure remission under the law, &c., by any attempt to obey the law. Beware.—Literally, "look," &c., look out, be on your guard. In the prophets, &c., in the prophetic writings, This voice, found in substance in Habakkuk 1: 3, is not a prophecy which Paul here declares about to be fulfilled, but it is language that had its fulfillment in the judgments brought upon the Jews by the Chaldeans, and is here simply used by the apostle as fully expressing the solemn warning he would give his hearers against the rejection of the gospel. The terrible scenes at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the terrible punishment of the finally impenitent, also answer to these words.

CENTRAL THOUGHTS.

I. Only in Christ Jesus is there forgiveness of sin. vs. 38, 39. The great doctrine of justification by faith is set forth for the first time by Paul clearly and distinctly announced. The historical facts are first cited, in order to lay a founda- tion for this central truth of the gospel, which the apostle presses home upon the hearts of his hearers. There are several distinct points involved in this doctrine. 1. The salvation is free, as faith is the sole condition. "All that believe." 2. The salvation is sufficient. "Justified from all things." 3. Salvation is otherwise impossible. "Could not be justified by the law." Lessons.—1. The door of mercy is opened to all "Who-soever will." 2. All that believe. 3. However great the multitude of our sins, the multitude of God's mercies in Christ Jesus is greater. The worst case is not too hard. Forgiveness of all sins is preached through Jesus. II. Rejection of Christ involves fearful and inevitable destruction. vs. 40, 41. God will work upon those who obey not the gospel a work of retribution which men will not believe, though it is repeatedly declared unto them. They will keep on despising and doubting until they "perish." Lessons.—1. Our unbelief about the punishment of sin will not alter the reality. 2. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? 3. To hear the gospel and not heed it, is worse for us than not to hear it at all. 4. Perdition and heaven go together.—Herrick Johnson, D.D., in Presbyterian of Work.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

THE GOVERNMENT IS MOVING IN THE MATTER of preventing grossly immoral literature from entering the country. The duty is not alone one of the Government, but of the whole community. Every father and mother should exercise as close a scrutiny over their children's moral food as ever their parental fondness. A mother should rather die than give her children poison for food; but many such mothers, either through carelessness or ignorance of the very great influence of evil literature, allow their children's minds to be poisoned as effectually as their bodies would be if they were to take arsenic.

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