



LESSON III.—April 18.

Gentiles Converted at Antioch

Acts xi., 19-26. Read Chapter xi. Commit vs. 21-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'—Acts xi., 18.

Home Readings.

M. Matt. xxvii., 33-66.—Jesus's Death and Burial.

T. Matt. xxviii., 1-15.—Jesus's Resurrection.

W. John xx., 19-31.—Doubting Thomas Convinced.

Th. Luke xxiv., 36-48.—'Behold . . . it is I Myself.'

F. John xi., 14-44.—'I am the Resurrection, and the Life.'

S. I Cor. xv., 1-26.—The Certainty of the Resurrection.

S. I Cor. xv., 27-58.—Death Swallowed up in Victory.

Lesson Story.

Some of those disciples who had fled from Jerusalem at the time of the first persecution had travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch preaching the word wherever they went, but only to the Jews. But when some of them arrived at Antioch they began to preach to the Greeks there, and God showed his approval by causing a great number of them to believe and to turn unto himself.

When the Church at Jerusalem heard of these things, they sent Barnabas, the Son of Consolation, down to Antioch to teach the new disciples and to strengthen and confirm them in the faith.

Now, Barnabas was 'a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.' He rejoiced when he saw how the Lord was converting the Gentiles, and exhorted them all to hold to the Lord with steadfast earnestness. But seeing there was far more work to be done than one man could profitably do, he went to find his old friend, Saul of Tarsus, (Acts ix., 27), and persuaded him to return with him to Antioch, where they stayed a whole year teaching the people. They became such a large company that the people of the city sought some name for them, they could not be called Jews as many of them were Gentiles. The name 'Disciples' was not sufficiently distinctive as there were doubtless disciples of other leaders there. This new sect claimed that their leader and Lord was Christ, why not call them Christians? And that name, bestowed perhaps in mockery, has now become one with which the most glorious privileges are associated.

Lesson Hymn.

In the harvest field there is work to do,
For the grain is ripe and the reapers few,
And the Master's voice bids the workers true
Heed the call that He gives to-day.

Crowd the garner well with its sheaves all bright,
Let the song be glad and the heart be light;
Fill the precious hours e'er the shades of night
Take the place of the golden day.

In the gleaner's path may be rich reward,
Tho' the time seem long, and the labor hard;
For the Master's joy, with His chosen shared,
Drives the gloom from the darkest day.

Lesson Hints.

Antioch—About three hundred miles north of Jerusalem, near the north-east angle of the Mediterranean. It was the third city of the Roman Empire and said to be foremost in refinement and culture though foremost in luxury and vice. A popular city to which many travellers came, it was a good situation for a strong aggressive church.

'Grecians'—This word in the Revised Version is 'Greeks,' implying that these were not Grecian Jews as in Chapter vi., 1—but Grecian Gentiles.

'Barnabas'—The man who had contribut-

ed so freely to the funds of the church in Jerusalem. (Chap. iv., 36, 37.)

'The Grace of God'—realizing that without this the efforts made by the Christian preachers would have been in vain. 'Purpose of heart'—Steadfast earnestness. 'Cleave unto the Lord'—As the branch to the vine. (John xv.) 'Full of the Holy Ghost'—The most important requisite for a teacher of God's word, or, indeed, for any follower of Christ. 'Much people was added unto the Lord'—These were not merely church members, but members of Christ. 'To seek Saul'—Remembering the great preaching and teaching powers Saul had displayed at Jerusalem. (Acts ix., 27-29.)

'Taught much people'—Paul in later years writing to Timothy gave as an essential qualification of a 'servant of the Lord' he must be 'apt to teach' patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.' (II. Tim. ii., 24, 25.)

'Christians'—The word is now commonly used to designate all those not openly irreligious or infidel, but its true meaning can be only applied to those whose whole-hearted fidelity proves them to be followers of the lowly Nazarine.

Search Questions.

How many persons are recorded in the bible as being 'full of the Holy Ghost?' Give references.

Primary Lesson.

In our lesson last week we learned how God admitted the Gentiles to his Church. Every one who is not a Jew is a Gentile. To-day we learn about many more Gentiles believing on Jesus and being received into the Church. Do you remember the man who loved Jesus so much that he was willing to die for him? And how, after Stephen's death most of the disciples left Jerusalem on account of the persecution? Well, some of these travelled hundreds of miles and everywhere they went they told about Jesus and his love to every one and that every one who was sorry for his sins and wanted to be good had just to ask Jesus to forgive them and to believe he would. They taught them of God's great love in sending his only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us that we through his death might have everlasting life. And that all who love and obey Jesus, trying to please him in every thing every day, will at last live with him always in heaven where all are happy because they love Jesus.

At first these disciples preached only to the Jews, but when they came to a city named Antioch they began to preach to the Gentiles, and many of them believed on Jesus and gave up their sins that they might serve and obey him.

There are some people who when they go to a place where there is no church make no effort to tell the people about the gospel, but Jesus wants each of us to be 'light-bearers,' and if you ever go anywhere where there is no Sunday-school will you not try to get a little Sunday-school started, or in some way try to carry the Gospel wherever you go?

Suggested Hymns.

'Wonderful words of life,' 'Speed away,' 'I love' to tell the story,' 'I think when I read,' 'Jesus calls us,' 'Take the name of Jesus with you.'

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR TOPIC.

April 11.—The brotherhood of man.—I John, iii., 1-24. (A missionary topic.)

JUNIOR PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

April 11.—What is the most interesting thing you know about Asia and its missions? Acts i., 1-8.

Practical Points.

(A. H. Cameron.)

They who make class distinctions when preaching the gospel are disobedient to their Master's commission. God will honor his word when spoken to prince or peasant. (verses 19, 20, 21; Matt. xxvii., 19.)

The exhortation of Barnabas is reasonable still. Half-hearted Christians are little better than infidels. (verses 22, 23.)

A leader among Christian workers is generally quick to detect capacity for usefulness in others. (verses 24, 25.)

Antioch before or since was never so highly favored as when the apostles held the fort for a whole year. The name the disciples received there has clung to them ever since. (verse 26.)

Tiverton, Ont.

The Superintendent and His Duties.

(By the Rev. O. P. Gifford, Boston, in the 'Watchman'.)

Three things should be insisted upon before a man be elected to the office of superintendent. It is not absolutely necessary that a superintendent be wealthy, or at the head of a large business, or eminent in a profession. He may be a laboring-man, his hands hard with toil, his income small, his social position unmarked but he must be a man above reproach in his dealings with men.

'Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.'

His name must be spoken without a lift of the eye-brows or a shrug of the shoulders. Superintendents should need no apologists. The Sunday-school had better be without a head than with one that needs protection by apology from the searching winds of investigation. A reputation for 'smartness' may possibly unfit for the office. The church cannot afford to put its seal upon, and commend to the boys as worthy of example, a man who is not above reproach in the world of affairs.

There is no danger in the present state of Christian conscience of electing a man of known impurity in social life or of drunkenness, but he should also be free from the tobacco habit. Boys imitate first and reason afterwards. The diamond edition of the cigar is the cigarette, and the boys of the school are all too ready to copy vices. A pipe or cigar is a poor censor, and tobacco smoke had incense for the worship of God. A smoker doesn't suggest the odor of sanctity in Sunday-school work. The superintendent is, by force of office, a living example. The boys look up to him, seek to follow him. A pillar of tobacco cloud doesn't guide to Sinai nor lead to Palestine. We do not need a man as superintendent who will place nicotine mortgages on boyish appetites and so lessen the value of the coming man.

The third thing is wisdom, especially in the use of leisure hours. Business, church, home, make large drafts on all of us; yet there are leisure hours. I venture the statement that any man attending the theatre is thereby unfitted for the office of superintendent. The play-house is born of and sustained by the world; its aim is amusement; its means rarely above criticism. It is spectacular, artificial, plays upon the feelings, is largely immoral in its methods and tendencies. You might beat out the play-house from American civilization to-day, and not lose any moral force or spiritual energy. Its undertow drags people away from God. It does not demand morality as a condition of entertaining behind the scenes, nor decency of those supporting it by their presence. The entrance is flanked by saloons, and the exit not marked by virtue. Judging by its bulletin-boards it has nothing to offer the Sunday-school needs. The man who supports it by his patronage is unfit to be a Sunday-school superintendent.

Babies in Church.

In Chinese families, one of the most regular attendants at church is pretty certain to be the baby. If the mother goes she never dreams of leaving baby at home, and in any good-sized congregation there will be a considerable sprinkling of these small creatures. When they are good and go to sleep (the best of babies can't do better in church) they are probably laid carefully on their backs on the bench, or even on the floor, while mamma fans the little half-yellow, half-pink face and listens as best she can to the sermon. When they are naughty—and what with heat, mosquitoes, and Chinese singing, even a celestial baby can be exasperated into naughtiness—they rave and scream and refuse to be comforted, much as non-celestial babies sometimes do at home.—'Recorder.'

Did you ever notice how quite young children like to hear stories told over and over? When you read or tell a nice story to little Susie, aged four, she says, 'Tell it again;' and when you have retold it she still says, 'Tell it again.' We have known little people to ask for a repetition three or four times. Primary teachers will do well to note this characteristic of young minds. They are not sated, as older children may be, and they take in truth in small doses by constant repetition.—'Evangelical Teacher.'