

✻ The Sunday School ✻

BIBLE LESSON.

Adapted from Hurlbut's Notes.

Second Quarter.

Lesson VIII.—May 23. Acts 15: 1-6, 22-29.

THE CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM.

[Read chapter 15, 1-35 and Gal. 2, 1-10.]

GOLDEN TEXT.

Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Acts 15, 11.

I. JEWISH LAW. VERSES 1-6.

1. CERTAIN MEN—Their names are omitted, either on account of their insignificance or out of contempt for their conduct. See the description of them in Gal. 2, 4. CAME DOWN—In ancient times the terms "up" and "down" were applied not only to high localities, but to great capitals. These false teachers may have represented themselves as sent by the apostles. TAUGHT THE BRETHREN—"Were continuously teaching." Like all other creatures after their kind they did not go to the heathen, but, with stealthy intrusion, sought to proselytize Christians to their own narrow, bigoted sectarianism. THE MANNER OF MOSES—The term "circumcision" used here stands not only for that particular rite, but for the whole ceremonial law of Moses, just as the baptism of John stands for the whole ministry of the Baptist, and the cross for the whole Gospel. CANNOT BE SAVED—From destruction. This Pharisaic party had a plausible plea. The Jewish religion was of divine origin. Circumcision was the badge of the covenant. The existence of Judaism was linked with Mosaic ritualism. Pride in their national religion made them put forth strong efforts to render this ritual of permanent obligation. On the other hand, to adopt this view would be to overthrow the Gospel system and make the new movement a mere Hebrew sect.

2. PAUL AND BARNABAS—Recognized heads of the church at Antioch. THEY DETERMINED—This "they" refers to the brethren mentioned in verse 1. UP TO JERUSALEM—Being the metropolis of all Christendom and having some of the apostles still there. Christians knew of no higher authority. It is not probable that the church at Jerusalem assumed authority over the other churches, but had rather a sort of pre-eminence as the mother church. As the party which had caused trouble at Antioch came from there it was fitting to check the disturbing influence in this way.

4. CAME TO JERUSALEM—This was Paul's third visit to Jerusalem since his conversion. See Gal. 2, 1-10. WERE RECEIVED—At a meeting held for the purpose. But they had previously informed James, Peter and John of the object of their mission. These private interviews and the public discussion settled Paul's equal apostleship. DECLARED ALL THINGS—See Acts 14, 27. This was done in a congregational meeting. The narrative would include a plain statement of the trouble at Antioch.

5. ROSE UP CERTAIN—It is not clear as to whether these were the same men now returned from Antioch, or copartisans resident in Jerusalem. The question stated was too grave to be decided by an immediate vote; another meeting was necessary to secure the deliberate judgment of the church.

6. CAME TOGETHER—Luke speaks only of the apostles and elders as constituting the assembly, but verses 12 and 22 show that the congregation was present and cooperated in deciding the question. The case in dispute was submitted to the general judgment of all the believers in Jerusalem.

II. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. VERSES 22-29.

22. THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS, WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH—Though the apostles possessed a divine authority, yet they sought the counsel and judgment of the general membership. "The multitude is present at the conference (verse 12), and the decision mentioned in verse 22 is that which seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church. It is most reasonable to suppose that the lay members, men and women, had some voice in this legislation of the primitive church."

—CHOSEN MEN OF THEIR OWN COMPANY—That the report of Paul and Barnabas might be verified by unprejudiced messengers. JUDAS SURNAMED BARABAS—Either the Barabas mentioned in Acts 1, 23, or his brother. SILAS—Afterward traveling companion of Paul, and mentioned in the epistles by his full name, Silvanus. CHIEF MEN—Possessing influence and endowed with the gift of prophecy (verse 32.)

23. LETTERS—As possessing more weight and designed for wider diffusion and great

er permanence than a verbal message. THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS AND BRETHREN—The Authorized Version reads "the apostles and elders and brethren;" but the second "and" is not found in the oldest manuscripts. The best rendering of the passage is that preferred by the American revisers, "the apostles and the elders, brethren," etc. It is a message from brethren to brethren. GREETING—The usual form of salutation, expressing "to wish peace and joy." BRETHREN WHICH ARE OF THE GENTILES—Though Gentiles, yet brethren. A noble step upward from Jewish intolerance. An example of large-hearted charity. The nearer to Christ, the warmer the brotherly love toward all Christians. ANTIOCH—There were sixteen cities of this name in Asia Minor, all founded by one monarch, Seleucus. This was the one in Syria; the greatest of all, the city from which Barnabas and Paul started.

24. CERTAIN WHICH WENT—Without being sent. TROUBLED YOU WITH WORDS—How much harm a word may work! SUBVERTING—Literally, unsettling, disturbing. It signifies the breaking down and destruction of a building. THE LAW—Not God's moral law, but the rituals and formalities of the Mosaic law, once valuable, but, now that Christ has come, passed away.

26. HAZARDED THEIR LIVES—Proved their fidelity by placing their lives in peril. This was a courteous reference to the narratives given by the two apostles of their missionary journeys.

28. TO THE HOLY GHOST, AND TO US—They claimed no authority coordinate with the Holy Ghost, but were conscious of His divine direction. NECESSARY THINGS—Partly from the nature of things, partly from circumstances, to avoid suspicion of idolatry from without, and to promote cordial and lasting union within the fold.

29. MEATS OFFERED TO IDOLS—At every idol sacrifice a portion of meat was reserved for eating by the worshipper at home or in public feasts. Christians were forbidden to partake of these feasts, partly to avoid unnecessary offense to Jewish scruples, but more especially lest they might unconsciously give countenance to idolatry. BLOOD—A prohibition as old as the deluge. THINGS STRANGLED—Because such would contain the blood. The Jews have in all the large cities butchers who are careful to prepare meat by bleeding the victim, not by knocking in the head. Over these stalls, or on the windows, will be seen the Hebrew word *kosher*, or "lawful," which means that all the requisites have been observed to present the meat ceremonially clean. There would be no rabbit that had been snared; and these meat stalls are often patronized by others than Jews, because of the care in selecting the animals, as well as in preparing them. FORNICATION—A crime fearfully prevalent among the Gentiles, not deemed wicked, but even applauded by some of the greatest heathen moralists. To abstain from idolatry and fornication was a duty they owed to God; to abstain from things strangled and from blood was a duty prescribed by fraternal love. IF YE KEEP YOURSELVES, YE SHALL DO WELL—So far as outward purity is concerned. Not that these were all, but all the points in dispute. Even when they mention these points which they deem necessary they employ very moderate terms as compared with the violent threats of the others. The difference between the true and false was very observable.

Life, like war, is a series of mistakes; and he is not the best Christian nor the best general who makes the fewest false steps. He is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes.—F. W. Robertson.

Japanese Poultry.

Among domesticated birds the Japanese silver pheasant easily takes the first rank. Although a small bird, not larger than a bantam rooster, the tail feathers, as well as the end feathers of the wings, grow to a length of from 18 to 20 feet on the male birds. This bird, which in Japan is called Katsuraito-no-Chabo, is domesticated there like any ordinary chicken. The hens are good egg producers and hatchers, but in order to keep them small in size the Japanese will not allow them to hatch until late in the year. The birds are very game and proud and form the pride of the Japanese poultry raiser. The longer the tail is the more valuable the bird is considered to be.

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In 1597 the people demanded plays; in 1897 they demand novels.

Two-thirds wheat and one-third cornmeal wet with skim milk and fed warm makes a good morning ration, especially for the laying hens. It is much better than cornmeal alone.

When closely confined, hens should have meat in some form to take the place of bugs and worms they get during the summer.

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A FLAT CONTRADICTION.

The Oft-Repeated Statements by Physicians that Chronic Rheumatism Cannot be Cured Refuted by Sworn Statements.

There never was a time when people were so sceptical in reference to medicine as the present; 'tis no wonder, for their credulity has been played upon by the unreliable claims of advertised cure-alls until doubt is converted into a belief that all announcements are imaginary pen pictures. Rheumatic sufferers are of the class whose intense suffering has led them to try first one thing, then another, until repeated failures convince them "there is no help for them." They hear about the startling cures made by Kootenay, but cannot overcome the suspicion that 'tis like all the rest. They do not know of the hidden power in "The new ingredient" peculiar to this preparation, that banishes rheumatism—of how it enabled George Ball blacksmith, residing corner Sanford Avenue and Huron Streets, Hamilton, to arise from a helpless condition and take up work in the City Quarries at hard labor, discharged from the hospital with the assurance "they could do nothing for him, his system was so full of rheumatism no power on earth could drive it out;" then lying at his home for weeks unable to lift hand to mouth, having to be fed by his wife, when the King's Daughters of Hamilton brought him Kootenay. Three bottles effected a complete cure. This is not more strange than the story told by Mrs. Guy, wife of Mail Carrier Robt. Guy, Brant Ave., Hamilton, whose mother love breathes thanks for the restoration of their seven year old Willie. His lower limbs were so swollen with inflammatory rheumatism he could not put his feet to the floor, the slightest touch causing intense pain, growing gradually worse, until his condition was pitiful; it seemed they were going to lose him, when Kootenay was used and three bottles completely cured him, so that he is going to school. The detailed sworn statements of above cures, with hundreds of others, can be obtained by addressing The Ryckman Medicine Co., Hamilton, Ont. If Kootenay is not obtainable of your dealer, send charges prepaid on receipt of price, \$1.50 per bottle. Send for Chart Book mailed free.

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The papers are full of deaths from

Heart Failure

Of course

the heart fails to act when a man dies,

but "Heart Failure," so called, nine times out of ten is caused by Uric Acid in the blood which the Kidneys fail to remove, and which corrodes the heart until it becomes unable to perform its functions.

Health Officers in many cities very properly refuse to accept "Heart Failure," as a cause of death. It is frequently a sign of ignorance in the physician, or may be given to cover up the real cause.

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