

and it is hard to see, simply because divine worship was celebrated on a particular day or days, that there was any real breach of uniformity. In these matters congregations must bow to the declared law of the church; but it is a pity that it should be necessary to interfere. Nothing can be more in harmony with the christian spirit than a religious service on the morning of the day on which the Saviour of mankind was born. We celebrate the birthday of our great men with the utmost pomp and ceremony. The most rigid Puritan, who would consider it almost an act of idolatry to enter a church decked with mistletoe on the 25th December, goes wild with enthusiasm on the 25th January, in commemoration of the birth of Robert Burns! We can see nothing but beauty, and a commendable cultivation of devotional feeling in celebrating these great days, in the life of Christ and the history of Christianity. The fear of Popery and Prelacy as an appeal is played out. Is Scotland less pious, less truly Presbyterian, since she took to erecting beautiful churches, instead of large ecclesiastical barns; since she decorated their interiors, put stained glass in the windows and introduced organs and hymns? As to some of the other innovations charged against the Dunse congregation, we have nothing to say. It is right that wherever particular conduct is challenged, the law of the church should be the guide to the decision of Assembly—the law, that is to say, not stretched to include deviations from the ordinary course, which are agreeable to a congregation and of little moment in themselves as far as other congregations are concerned.

Our catechists are doing good service in supplying our vacant charges. Fifteen new communicants were added to the church at East Branch at last communion. This congregation is building a first-class manse, to be ready before winter.

## S. S. LESSONS.

Notes on International Sabbath School Lessons, by Rev. F. N. and M. A. Peloubet.

LESSON XI. June 11. 1876.

THE APOSTLES BEFORE THE COUNCIL.—  
ACTS 5: 27-42.

(A. D. 33.)

28. Straitly command.—Expressly, abso-  
lutely, peremptorily, strictly. Literally "com-  
mand with a commandment."

29. And the other apostles.—Peter spoke  
in their name. (Sec 2: 14.)

30. The God of our fathers.—Our own  
national and covenant God. Our identities  
the speaker and the hearer as belonging to  
the same race and believing the same Scrip-  
ture. Here again we have the favorite anti-  
thesis or contrast between Christ's treatment at  
the hands of God and man, which may be de-  
scribed as the key note of this and the three  
previous discourses of Peter.

31. The Prince or King described by Pe-  
ter was one which was well known as applied  
to the Messiah.

32. So the Holy Ghost.—What took place  
on the day of Pentecost was a testimony of  
this nature, and that or some equivalent sign  
was repeated on other occasions.

33. Cut to the heart.—At this, indeed, we  
need not be surprised; for what is so cutting  
as a true charge brought, when persons cannot  
answer it?

34. Signifies persons who are separated  
from others, which name they assumed because  
they pretended to a more than ordinary sanc-  
tity and strictness in religious observances.

36, 37. Theudas, Judas.—To this mention  
of Theudas an objection has been taken which  
it is important to clear up. It is said to be  
opposed to the statements of Josephus, who in  
his "Antiquities of the Jews," relates that  
when Fadus was Procurator of Judea, one  
Theudas prevailed upon a great multitude to  
take with them their wealth, and follow them  
to the river Jordan.

38, 39. This is the mere advice of Gama-  
liel, who was not inspired; and this opinion  
should not be adduced to guide us, except as  
it was an instance of great shrewdness and  
prudence.

41. The happiest man in Camp Convalescent  
was a soldier who had lost both his legs, but  
had found Christ.

42. When the Apostles were released and  
addressed the people, they did not complain  
about their enemies, did not boast of their own  
firmness, did not defend their character, which  
had been sullied by the scourge, but simply  
preached the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ.