

## Sunday School and Bible Class.

[As various clergy throughout the Province have from time to time asked us to insert notes on subjects that would be useful for Sunday school teachers and Bible classes, we intend giving notes for two courses of instruction,—and, if we find that these are of service generally, other courses will be given. In connection with this matter, we shall be glad to receive suggestions from interested clergy and laity.—Ed.]

### The Church in "The Acts of the Apostles."

#### LESSON I.

The many divisions of Christendom, and the perplexity caused thereby, make it most important that every Churchman and Churchwoman should have some acquaintance with the history of the Church in Apostolic days. The nearer we get to the fountain-head, the purer will be the stream.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world for the redemption of the human race. In order to fulfil His gracious purpose, He laid the foundation of a special Kingdom, deep down in the hearts of His followers. He called His twelve Apostles out from their fellows, to aid Him in the establishment of this Kingdom, which is His church. He Himself initiated the work, but He left the development of His scheme to the twelve, who would act under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the ever Blessed Trinity.

The Church of England, in her nineteenth article, gives the following definition:—"The Visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." This Society Christ founded, making it separate and distinct from all worldly societies, and political organizations, and in no wise dependent on these.

Christ's own individual work in the scheme of redemption was completed when He re-assumed His place in Heaven—the continuation of the work was carried on by the Holy Ghost, working in and through the Apostles. To gain a knowledge of the progress of the work—the development of the Church, we must study the Acts of the Apostles. Were we to take away the Acts and a few references and allusions in the Pauline Epistles, there would be no really authoritative history of the Apostolic age.

First, a word or two as to the authorship of the book. All the evidence goes to show that the Acts was written by St. Luke.

1. The testimony of early Christian writers

Irenaeus, who lived about the year 200 A. D., first makes a distinct reference to the Acts, and to St. Luke as its author.

Tertullian, who lived a little later, taunts the heretic Marcion for receiving St. Paul as an Apostle, and not receiving the Acts, in which alone his history is recorded by St. Luke.

Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, who both lived about the middle of the third century, speak of the Acts as having been written by St. Luke.

Jerome, about the middle of the fourth century, asserted that a certain priest of Asia added to the genuine Acts of St. Luke the voyages of St. Paul and Thecla, and other traditions.

2. The similarity of style and idiom, as well as the use of particular words, observable only in the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

3. The allusion in the preface of the Acts to another treatise written by the author. The only book in the New Testament to which this can refer is St. Luke's Gospel.

4. The internal evidence.

From Chap. 16, Verse 10, we learn that the writer was with St. Paul on his second journey. The first person is used for the first time in this narrative, showing that he—the writer—accompanied St. Paul on his visit to Macedonia. From Chap. 20 we learn that the writer went with St. Paul through Asia Minor, and to Jerusalem, and from Chap. 21, that he accompanied him to Caesarea, and from Chap. 28 that he went with him to Rome. This person could be no other but St. Luke.

5. Even Credner, the German rationalist, and Ernest Renan, the French agnostic, both say that St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts were written by one and the same person.

It is worthy of notice that the title of the book, although an old one, was not given to it by St. Luke.

A word or two as to the personal history of St. Luke himself. He is mentioned three times in St. Paul's epistles—in Colossians iv. 14, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you;" in 11 Timothy iv. 11, "Only Luke is with me;" in Philemon. xxiv. "Lucas, my fellow laborer."

The name Lucas seems to be a shortened form of Lucanus, or Lucilius. Eusebius says he was born at Antioch. The date of his conversion to Christianity is unknown. He apparently was not an eyewitness from the beginning (St. Luke i. 2.) He is universally believed to have learned

hypocrisy in any form was scathing in its expression. A rebuke from him was a fearful thing to bear. A bishop whom he dearly loved wrote to excuse himself from attending the solemn opening of a convocation, which was to be immediately prorogued, on the ground that he supposed the business would be purely formal. "That," replied the Archbishop, "depends wholly upon your Lordship; the business of the convocation is prayer." Yet this severity was only in proportion to what has been called an almost womanly tenderness of sympathy. He had the true gifts of a peacemaker, for he instinctively seized upon what was best and truest in other men and their ways, and honored them accordingly. He bore misrepresentation with well-trained patience, and said nothing. Few men have ever had so many real friends and been so faithful to them. —London Times.

In the Diocese of New Westminster there is a special mission to the native Indians, as well as to the Chinese immigrants, but, as has already been stated, the funds from local circumstances have failed, and help is greatly needed. There is at present an urgent need for a church to be built on Lulu Island, at the mouth of the Fraser River, and the sum of \$100 would supply it. The incumbent, Rev. J. M. Donaldson, can raise \$200 locally, if church-people outside the parish will only raise a similar sum. Surely, it is the bounden duty (and it ought to be a privilege) for western churchmen and churchwomen to give at least a small portion of what they collect for mission work to aid this diocese in its hour of dire need! Surely they will not stand still and see good work dropped, because there has been a misunderstanding between the authorities of the diocese and those English helpers, upon whose work in the past so much reliance has been placed! Even if we cannot spare much pecuniary aid, we can at all events give our perplexed and troubled brethren our heartiest sympathy, and our earnest prayers that God may set in order the tangled web, and throw bright rays of Divine light on the path which at present seems so dark!

The Bishop of Bath and Wells has invited all the bishops—over 100—who will attend the Lambeth Conference this year, to visit Glastonbury Abbey on August 3, the day after the closing of the Conference, where it is proposed to hold a service with the object of drawing attention to the existence of the British Church before the arrival of St. Augustine and his companions, and to the connection of the Church of England with that Church, and through it, with some of the earliest efforts to spread the Gospel in the west."