

LESSON VIII—May 23rd, 1897.

The Conference at Jerusalem. Acts 15: 1-6, 22-29.

(Commit to memory verses 8, 14, and read chapter 15: 1-36; Gal. 2: 1-10).

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

PROVE THAT—There is one Saviour only. 1 Tim. 2: 5.

SHORTER CHATECHISM. Quest. 103. *What do we pray for in the third petition?* A. In the third petition (which is, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*), we pray, That God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymns*—Nos. 6, 28, 215, 100.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The conference at Jerusalem. Acts 15: 1-11. *Tuesday.* The conference at Jerusalem. Acts 15: 12-21. *Wednesday.* The conference at Jerusalem. Acts 15: 22-32. *Thursday.* Paul's reference. Gal. 2: 1-10. *Friday.* The true rule. Gal. 6: 11-18. *Saturday.* True righteousness. Phil. 3: 1-11. *Sabbath.* One in Christ. Col. 3: 8-17. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. In Lesson III we had an account of the admission of the first gentile converts at Antioch. They worshipped with other christians and were received into full fellowship by their Jewish brethren there. But certain more rigid disciples from Jerusalem were shocked at their neglect of circumcision and the ceremonial law, and created trouble in the church, by teaching that all gentiles must become Jews as well as christians. This would have made christianity a mere sect of Judaism and introduced erroneous doctrine. Our lesson tells how the dispute was settled. Time A. D. 50.

LESSON PLAN. I. Jewish Law. vs. 1-6. II. Christian Liberty. vs. 22-29.

1. Except ye be circumcised—That is, except ye become Jews ye cannot become true christians. They believed circumcision to be essential to salvation (Gal. 5: 2; Col. 2: 8, 11, 16). 2. Certain other—One of these was Titus (Gal. 2: 3). **Apostles and elders**—The "elders" were the "presbyters," or ordained ministers of the Word. We read also that there were "brethren" present at the council (verse 23). These doubtless corresponded to our "ruling elders." The constitution of the apostolic church was essentially Presbyterian. 3. Brought on their way—Supplied with provision for the journey and accompanied a short distance on the way. Great joy—All true-hearted christians were glad to hear of the conversion of the heathen. 4. Received of the church—Probably at a public meeting to welcome them. Had done with them—They were God's fellow laborers, yet only the instruments by which he wrought—They gave him all the glory (Mark 16: 20). 5. Pharisees—They carried their narrow spirit into the christian church with them. These agreed with those who disturbed the church at Antioch. 6. The first council of the christian church. (Our selection omits the deliberations of the council, but scholars are expected to read the whole carefully). 22. *Syllas*—Afterwards Paul's travelling companion (16: 25; 17: 4; 2 Cor. 1: 19). We know not hings about Jude (1: 23). 23. **Apostles and elders and brethren**—

The three classes in the council. "The brethren" probably represented the laity of the church. The R. V. omits the second "and," reading "apostles and elder brethren." 24. **Subverting your souls**—Unsettling your minds. Such false teaching as would utterly overthrow their faith. No such commandment—They spoke without any authority (Titus 1: 10, 11). 25. **Having come to one accord** (R. V.)—It was an unanimous decision. 26. **Men that have hazarded their lives**—Referring to the dangers they had encountered in their late missionary journey (ch. 13: 50; 14: 19; 1 Cor. 15: 20; 2 Cor. 11: 23, 26). For the name—The name stands for the divine dignity of Jesus. They preached every where that Jesus was the Messiah and this led to their being persecuted. 27. **By mouth**—They would be able to explain more fully why this decision was made. 28. **To the Holy Ghost and to us**—The church then realized the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in every thing, for simple faith rested on Christ's promise (John 16: 13). Meats offered to idols—Food that had been presented first before the idol before coming to the table. To eat of it was to countenance idolatry and superstition. From blood—This prohibition was as old as the deluge. They were not to offend the prejudices of Jewish brethren and to keep themselves unspotted from the world.

LESSONS. 1. We should bear with the prejudices of others. 2. Differences of opinion should be settled by friendly conference. 3. God will show us how to decide for his glory. 4. Liberty is good, but love is better. 5. The Holy Spirit is ready to assist us.