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The Sabbath School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter Lesson 5 May 4 1902

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH IN SYRIA.

Acts 11: 19-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.*—Acts 11: 21.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 22-24; Rom. 12: 10, 13; Isa. 62: 1, 2.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—The formation of the church at Antioch began some time after the persecution began at the martyrdom of Stephen, and continued to grow. Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in some part of A. D. 43-46. The famine occurred during 43-48. The one in Palestine A. D. 46 according to Ramsay. Paul and Barnabas visit Jerusalem during this period, perhaps A. D. 46 (Ramsay) or 44 (Lewin).

Place.—Antioch, three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. It was the capital of Syria, and one of the three greatest and most luxurious cities in the world at that time. St. Luke was a native of this city.

THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH.—Vs. 19-21. Antioch was situated in western Syria on the river Orontes, sixteen miles from its mouth and about three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. It was the capital of Syria at this time. Its population was five hundred thousand, making it the third city in the Roman Empire, only Rome and Alexandria being greater. It was the center of an immense trade. The trade brought in great wealth and luxury. The city abounded in beautiful buildings. The population was cosmopolitan, Jews, Greeks, Syrians, Romans, and all nationalities, races, and languages, freemen and slaves, cultured and ignorant, wealthy and poverty-stricken, philosophers and debauchees. Vice as well as luxury made the city infamous. Four or five miles from the city were the famous pleasure grounds of Daphne, known all over the world, where was a temple of Apollo and his colossal statue, where all that was beautiful in nature and art had created a sanctuary for a perpetual festival of vice. Daphene had become proverbial for its luxurious festivals, unbridled debauchery, and unnatural vices.

Formation of the Church at Antioch. *Now they which were scattered abroad.* The authorities tried to blow out the gospel fire kindled by the Holy Spirit, but it only made it burn the brighter. *As far as Phenice.* Phœnicia, the strip of coast between the Mediterranean and the mountains of Lebanon, extending one hundred and twenty miles from a point a little below Tyre, northward to Beirut, from which, in the autumn of 1895, a railroad was opened to Damascus. *Cyprus*, a large island in the Mediterranean. *And Antioch* the most northern large city on the coast. *Preaching the word to.... Jews only.* According to the practice and feelings of the Jewish Christians when they left Jerusalem *And*, rather But, *Men of Cyprus.* The island opposite Tarsus, which Paul had been making the headquarters of his preaching for several years. *And Cyrene.* On the coast of Africa. *Spake unto the Grecians.* Before this the disciples sought to convert to Jesus only the Jews (including the Grecians who were Jews), but now they began to preach to the Gentiles as such *The hand of the Lord.* The head of the church. Thus *a great number believed.* The Lord proved by his power in touching their hearts and renewing their lives that he wanted th se people in his church.

Thus was founded the First Gentile Church. This church grew to be a center of religious power and influence.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES.—Vs. 22-24. *Then tidings of these things came unto Jerusalem.* They were doubtless received with joy mingled with fears as to what the outcome might be. Some would be prepared for the new regime by the conversion of Cornelius and Peter's vision; others would see in it impending disaster, and the ruin of the new religion.

A Wise Movement. Then the church at Jerusalem did a very right thing, they sent forth Barnabas (1) to learn the exact truth about the reports. (2) To prevent any abuses or discord from arising between the Jewish and Gentile converts. (3) To encourage the new disciples in everything that was good. *As far as Antioch.* Implying that he visited other churches on the way.

What he saw. *When he came, and had seen the grace of God*, as shown in the converts, their changed character, their good deeds. *Was glad.* One test of character is what a person rejoices in. There is nothing worthier of great joy than the conversion of men; *Exhorted them all.* He strengthened, encouraged, stimulated them by his counsels. *That with purpose of heart.* With the will and affections, the whole choice of the soul. *Then would cleave unto the Lord.* The only way to stand firm and strong amid the many temptations of life, by cleaving to the Lord as the branch to the vine. *For he was a good man.* This was shown in his joy that Gentiles were converted as well as Jews, through others as well as himself. *Full of the Holy Ghost.* He lived in the Spirit, and was endowed with power by the Spirit *And of faith.* Perfect trust in the Lord, perfect confidence that Jesus was the Messiah; perfect devotion to his cause *And much people was added unto the Lord.* Through his labors.

PAUL COMES TO THE ASSISTANCE OF THE ANTIOCH CHURCH.—Vs. 25, 26 *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul.* It was during these years that Paul had the visions and revelations spoken of in 2 Cor. 12: 1-5, which may have prepared him for his great work. *A whole year they* (Barnabas and Paul) *assembled themselves with the church* (at their places of worship), *and taught.* The young church, just delivered from heathenism, had especial need of instruction. *The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* Not by the Jews who would not recognize Jesus, as Christ, that is Messiah, but by the people outside the disciples.

Practical. 1. Let us keep Christ's name, disciples, learners, and the new name Christian, to show that a Christian is always a learner.

2. Do nothing to the reproach of that worthy name by which we are called; that that may not be said to us, which Alexander said to a soldier of his own name, that was noted for a coward, 'Either change thy name or mend thy manners.' This name was a witness to the preaching and teaching of the church. Christ was the center of all. All doctrines, all influences, all history even, circle around the cross of Christ.

THE FAMINE AND THE RELIEF FUND.—Vs. 27-30. *In these days* While the church was being founded in Antioch. *Came prophets* Those speaking forth God's message. *Agabus.* Nothing is known about him, beyond what is told here, and a symbolic prophecy some years later concerning Paul. (Acts 21: 10) *Great dearth* (famine) *throughout all the world.* The term refers to the inhabited world of the Roman Empire. *In the days of Claudius*, who reigned A. D. 41-54. *The disciples....determined to send relief.* The prophecy of the famine was made in order to give the disciples time to collect money and food in advance. They believed the prophet, and proceeded to prepare the relief. The money was probably collected by weekly contributions, for the congregation was not rich, and coin was not plentiful in Syrian cities. *Which also they did* after the famine had begun, and after the persecution by Herod, and Herod's death in A. D. 44. Most of the early Christians at Jerusalem were probably poor. *By the hands of Barnabas and Saul.* This was Paul's second visit to Jerusalem. This distribution by the hands of the leaders in the Gentile church, of the bounty gathered in Antioch, would make a most favorable impression. It would tend to dissipate any prejudices or fears the Jews may have entertained. It would show that the gospel produced the same fruits among Gentile believers as it had produced in the Jerusalem disciples. It was a means of grace and spiritual growth to the church at Antioch.

Can we Help Unlovely Children?

We all know unlovely children—unlovely in disposition and character. They are the possessed of evil many times, and a source of heartache and perplexity to those who are responsible for their training.

I have known such children. One comes especially to my mind. Twenty years ago, a more unlovely, perverse, unsmiling child it would be hard to find. Strange as it may seem, these traits appeared strongest when she was with her mother. For her to be punished, as was absolutely necessary at times, was enough to give the whole family hysteria. To most people, seeing only the seeable side of the child, without caring to look for what else might might have been found, she was almost utterly without a sweet side in her whole make-up; but what an injustice to helplessness!

There was a friend whom this child loved with all the intensity of a silent, deep, misunderstood little heart. To this friend alone she revealed the possibilities of her

ted with the church at Lower Perth. r hope was in Christ. She leaves four s and two daughters, also a large circle relations and friends to mourn their .

L. A. F.

VANWART.—At Adelaide street, St. n, on April 10th, William VanWart, in 80th year of his age. Bro. VanWart of the love and admiration often fo ch by her exquisitely beautiful nature. I remember, one day, the two little girls were standing together when a caller was taking her leave. Like many other thoughtless people, the lady stooped down and fondly kissed the little sister, saying, You are the sweetest child I ever saw; and then she went away, leaving one smiling little face and one on which there was a pathetic little shadow.

As the door closed, the elder sister, with rare self renunciation, put her arms around her little sister, saying, She is sweet.

Little sister is with God, but there still lives on earth the unlovely elder sister—no longer unlovely. She has ripened into a deep hearted, quiet, beautiful woman, loving and beloved.

Another child comes to my mind, so unlovely in nature that the most generous almost despair of finding a place to begin to love him. In many, many almost indescribable ways he was forbidding. People generally set him down as disagreeable, bad, a general nuisance, according to their own temperament.

But who dares to desert such a child? Who helps a child helps humanity. Who helps such a child does even more—he saves. Recognizing his own unloveliness, this boy receives with an astonishment that has many a touch of pathos in it any of the smallest kindnesses so lavishly bestowed on attractive childhood. The sweetness that seem to belong so naturally to other children are denied him, except on rare occasions, when some one, pityingly, or with a deeper and kindlier discernment, bestows them. It can only be through long, loving-hearted, and unsleeping, unwearying patience that the best in his nature is capable of will be revealed, and the unlovely child become at last the useful and respected man, with some keen sense, let us hope, of the deep need of pity, patience, and kindness to all childhood, but most of all to that which seems unlovely.

Again, let us plead for unlovely children, for those who, recognizing their own unloveliness, are powerless to overcome what must be hateful to themselves, and whose tender hearts must often hunger for some morsels of the love lavished on sweeter natures, until to them life becomes something of a tragedy. Let us keep a watch abroad for these little ones, so often misinterpreted, and if for a while they seem unlovely, let us never let a child realize that it is unlovely.—Belle Sparr Luckett, in Sunday School Times.

Interpretation of Highland Clan Names.

The following table gives the meaning of the names of the principal Highland clans in Scotland

M'Intosh, the son of the First

M'Donald, the son of Brown Eyes.

M'Dugall, the son of Black Eye

M'Onnechy or Duncan, the son of Brown Head.

M'Gregor, the son of a Green Man.

M'Cuithbert, the son of the Arch Druid.

M'Kay, the son of the Prophet

M'Taggart, the son of the Priest

M'Leod, the son of the Wounded

M'Lean, the son of the Lion.

M'Kenzie, the son of the Friendly One.

Campbell, Crooked Mouth.

Cameron, Crooked Nose.

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