

Sunday School Lesson

October 27th, 1946

A. D. Cann

PAUL'S WIDENING FIELD OF SERVICE

Lesson: Acts 13:1-5; 13, 14; 44-46; 48-49; 14:26-27

Golden Text: It pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen. Galatians 1:15-16

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Our lesson includes the story of the call of the Spirit to the leaders in Antioch to send forth Christian workers to the regions beyond. It also gives a part account of Paul's first missionary journey.

I. MISSIONARIES SENT—Acts 13:1-5

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The church at Antioch was the first to send out voluntary missionaries. Those who had gone out from Jerusalem had done so because of persecution at home. The leaders at Antioch had a vision for the spread of the gospel. It was not the result of their own enterprise or genius, but rather the product of the Holy Ghost in them. They lived so near to God and so practised the means of grace that the Holy Spirit revealed His mind to them.

It meant much for Paul and Barnabas to leave this church where they had been ministering for some time and go to a new field, but such was their calling and they were not disobedient. It is significant to note that fasting in the early church was a common practice. Great benefits are gained to the work of God by temporary abstaining from food and giving one's time to prayer and meditation upon God's Word. The first place the missionaries visited was Salamis, on the island of Cyprus. They met with great success, thus the Holy Spirit put his seal upon the work of the missionaries from the very start.

II. MISSIONARIES OPPOSED—Acts 13:13, 14; 44-46:

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said: It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles." When the apostles came to Antioch in Pisidia, Paul was invited to give a public address in the synagogue. It was so well received by the Gentiles that he was invited to repeat the message the following Sunday. A revival broke out and the crowds came to hear the word. The unbelieving Jews got angry and began to oppose the apostles. So jealous were they that they contradicted the apostles and blasphemed. At this point in his ministry Paul turned to the Gentiles.

III. MISSIONARIES CONQUER—Acts 13:48, 49; 14:26-27:

"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." The apostles had some outstanding experiences in Lystra where Paul was stoned by the Jews and left for dead. Courageously they revisited the churches where they had been so bitterly opposed in order that young converts might be established and the churches organized through the appointment of elders.

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. The first missionaries were sent out by the Holy Ghost. Show the importance of co-operation between the human and the Divine in this regard.
2. Why were the missionaries opposed and with what result?
3. Show the importance of fasting and praying in doing the will and service of God.
4. Why did not the Apostles pass by those

sections where they were so bitterly persecuted?

November 3, 1946

PAUL CHAMPIONS FREEDOM AND BROTHERHOOD

Lesson: Acts 15:23-29; Galatians 5:13-18

Golden Text: We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved. Acts 15:11

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Due to different nationalities, differences of opinion had arisen in the church relative to the conversion of the Gentiles. Many of the Jewish Christians wanted the Gentiles to be saved by becoming Jews, the true people of God. The contention led to—

I. THE CONFERENCE OF JERUSALEM—Acts 15:23-29:

The conference of Jerusalem constituted one of the most important events in the first century of the Christian church. The issue that brought about this council was the contention on the part of some that observance of the whole Mosaic law and ceremonies were essential to salvation. This was contrary to fact as Peter, Paul and others had found in their ministry to the Gentiles. Peter relates his experience in ministering in the house of Cornelius how that God "put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith." The Gentiles were converted and sanctified without practicing the ceremonial law. This was an attempt on the part of the Devil to destroy the Christian system by introducing Jewish ceremonialism.

The decision of the council of Jerusalem was as follows (1) The Gentiles need not become Jews and obey Jewish ritual. (2) The law was not necessary for salvation; no forms could save anyone, but only faith in Jesus Christ. (3) The Gentiles are children of Abraham through faith.

II. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY—Galatians 5:13-18.

"For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Law is essential to liberty.

The apostles contest with the Jews was not over keeping the moral law, but over the necessity of observing the Mosaic ceremonies of which circumcision was chief. Paul believed in observing the moral law, though even this could not save a person. The Christian life consists of fellowship with Jesus Christ. To trust in anything else regardless of how orthodox, is to build on a sandy foundation. There are at least two dangers which we face here: (1) To trust in the law for salvation. (2) To turn liberty into license or to disregard the moral law and assume a justified relation with God. Christian liberty is the unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ. The great truth of the lesson is justification by faith. While this is true we must not forget that faith is always attended by corresponding works. "Faith without works is dead."

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. (a) What contention arose that made necessary the Conference of Jerusalem? (b) What was the decision of this Council?
2. How may people be prevented from substituting the means of grace as "baptism," "the Lord's Supper," etc., for grace itself?
3. Name two dangers we face relative to the law and how may we overcome them?

THIS UTTERMOST SALVATION

Why should any man of reason and religion be either afraid of, or averse to, salvation from all sin? Is not sin the greatest evil on this side of hell, and if so, does it not naturally follow that an entire deliverance from it is

one of the greatest blessings on this side of heaven? How earnestly then should it be prayed for by all the children of God! By sin I mean a voluntary transgression of a known law. Are you averse to being delivered from this? Are you afraid of such a deliverance? Do you then love sin, that you are unwilling to part with it? Surely not. You do not love either the devil or his works. You rather wish to be totally delivered from them; to have sin rooted out of both your life and your heart.—John Wesley in Christian Perfection.

HEART PURITY

(Continued from Page 3)

phets'; these contain the whole of Christian perfection."

Following his definition of Christian perfection, Mr. Wesley says: "St. Peter expresses it in a still different manner, though to the same effect: 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' (I. Peter 1:15). According to this apostle, then perfection is a name for universal holiness; inward and outward righteousness; holiness of life arising from holiness of heart."

Can anything be more reasonable or desirable than the supreme reign of the love of God in the heart and life? The supreme reign of love banishes from our lives those evil tempers, tendencies, and inward uprisings which hinder the supreme reign of Christ in our lives. The throne of holiness is a throne where the love of God reigns supreme in our lives.

Can anything be more reasonable or desirable than the reign of love? God's love has been manifested in a ministry for every human being. Man's first and supreme need was for salvation. To meet this need God says that he sent his only begotten Son into the world for human redemption. Jesus ministered to every human need during the days of his earthly ministry, which was climaxed with his atoning death for the souls of men.

The disciples of Jesus were amazed at his menial service when he washed their feet. The service which emanates from a holy heart and life is in the name of Jesus. A cup of cold water is not to be given in the name of humanity, but in the name of Jesus. The passion of a holy heart will minister to the sick and the afflicted, and the imprisoned and underprivileged, not for the sake of, or in the name of a program of social service, but in the name of, and for the sake of, one crucified, risen, and ascended Lord, who is the One and only Redeemer of the race. God has ordained that all service for humanity be in the name of Jesus, who is the redemptive head of the human race.—Selected.

WEDDINGS

Perkins-Cousins

On September 9th, at the Reformed Baptist parsonage, Milltown, Me., Fletcher Albert Perkins, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Perkins, of Alexander, Maine, and Clarice Audrey Cousins, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Cousins, Alexander, were united in marriage by Rev. E. R. Watson.

Miller-Lambert

On September 14th, at the Reformed Baptist parsonage in North Head, N. B., Rev. J. A. Owens united in marriage Mrs. Harley Miller and Miss Edna Faye Lambert.