

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA.

A. D. 52.] LESSON VI. [Feb. 10 Acts 16. 11-24. Commit to mem. vs. 13-22. GOLDEN TEXT.

Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.—Acts 16. 14.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Gospel brings blessing both to the soul and to the body.

TIME.—A. D. 52. Paul had spent nearly a year in Asia Minor.

PLACE.—Philippi, in Macedonia, on the spot where 84 years before Augustus Caesar had fought the great battle with Brutus and Cassius.

PAUL.—Aged 49, on his second great missionary journey.

THE PHILIPPINIANS were a nobler race of men than most in Asia Minor, and women here held a more independent position, and were held in higher honour.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS. Claudius Caesar, emperor of Rome. Cumanus, governor of Judaea, was deposed, and Felix took his place. An edict banishing all Jews from Jerusalem. Passover, April 2. Pentecost, May 23. Tabernacles, Sept. 27.

INTRODUCTION.—Paul and Silas, after spending about a year among the churches of Asia Minor, left by a vision at Troas, crossed over to Europe and began their work at Philippi.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—11. Same place.—An island in the Aegean. Neapolis.—The seaport of Philippi, ten miles distant. 12. A colony.—i. e. A military city, in a conquered country, planted by Roman citizens who still held their citizenship and rights to vote at Rome, and governed the city after the manner of Rome. 13. Where prayer was wont to be made.—At proesechia, or prayer-house, enclosed, but open to the sky, and used by the Jews in places where there was no synagogue. 14. Purple.—Either the dye or the cloth. 16. Demetrius possessed with a spirit of divination.—Or fortune telling. She was really possessed of an evil spirit. Brought.... much gain.—People paid for the advice or fortune telling of one supposed to be taught by a spirit. She was a mixture of fraud, clairvoyance, insanity, and devil. Soothsaying.—Fortune telling, sooth-saying, future reatly. 19. What her matters were.—Their real motive was the interference of the Gospel with their unrighteous gains. 21. Teach customs.—This was the motive by which they stirred up the people. 24. Inner prison.—The dark, damp, close prison within a prison.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Paul's journey—Philippi—The Philippinians—Places of prayer—Lydia's conversion—A spirit of divination—How the Gospel interferes with the gains of bad men—The opposition of the world to Christ—Inner prison—Stocks.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTION.—In what missionary journey was Paul now engaged? Who were with him? In what year after Christ? Name the contemporary events. Why did Paul leave Asia Minor? How long was it since he started on this tour?

SUBJECTS.—THREE EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL. I. FIRST EFFECT.—CONVERTING THE SOUL (vs. 11-15).—From what place did Paul sail? Trace his journey on the map. At what place did he first land in Europe? In what city did he first preach the Gospel there? What can you tell about Philippi and the Philippinians? What great battle was once fought at Philippi? Where did Paul first preach the Gospel? Who were his audience? Who was his first convert? What can you tell about Lydia? Meaning of God opened her heart? How does God open our hearts? Contrast her conversion with that of Paul. Why are people led to Christ in such different ways? Are such conversions as Lydia's as real as those which are more violent? What lessons can you learn from her conversion? How did she profess her faith? How did she prove her faith? Should every Christian do the same?

II. SECOND EFFECT.—RELIEVING OUR DISTRESSES (vs. 16-18).—What unfortunate girl met the apostles at Philippi? What was the matter with her? How did her masters make money through her, mis-

fortune? Was this a wicked way to get gain? Why? Was she to blame? What did she say about Paul? Was this a sign that she wished to get rid of the demon? At what was Paul grieved? How did he effect a cure? In what way is the Gospel a blessing to our bodies? Did Christ prove that he could help the soul by helping the bodies of men? Should we work on the same plan?

III. THIRD EFFECT.—AWAKING THE OPPOSITION OF BAD MEN (vs. 19-24).—How did the slave's masters feel about this cure? Give a similar example in Christ's time. (Luke 9. 26-37.) Another—Paul's experience. (Acts 18. 23-27.) Why did this show a mean spirit? Give illustrations in our day of men who oppose the Gospel for the same reason. Is the Gospel opposed to all unjust and selfish gains? Is this the real reason why men oppose it? What was done to Paul and Silas? What was the charge brought against them? Was this the real reason of the persecution? What three forms of suffering were inflicted on Paul and Silas? Does he ever mention this again? (1 Thes. 2. 2.)

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. Mark the usefulness and power of woman in the Church? The great church at Philippi grew out of a little prayer-meeting of women. 2. By using the privileges we have, our hearts are prepared for greater. 3. God opens the heart (1) by smaller measures of grace; (2) by his spirit; (3) by his providence; (4) by sincere worship. 4. Those who believe should confess Christ publicly. 5. Bad men make money out of the misfortunes and to the injury of others. 6. The Gospel opposes all unjust gains. 7. Therefore bad men oppose the Gospel.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert.)

6. Where did Paul first preach in Europe? Ans. At Philippi, in Macedonia. 7. Who was the first convert there? Ans. Lydia, a seller of purple. 8. Whom did Paul next help? Ans. He cured a demoniac slave girl. 9. What was the effect of this? Ans. It aroused the opposition of those who had made money out of her misfortune. 10. What did they do? Ans. They beat Paul and Silas, and put them into prison.

A. D. 51.] LESSON VII. [Feb. 17

THE CONVERSION OF THE JAILER.

Acts 16. 25-40. Commit to mem. vs. 29-33. GOLDEN TEXT.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.—Acts 16. 31.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The first great question for all to answer, What must I do to be saved?

TIME.—A. D. 51. Immediately after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Philippi in Macedonia (now Turkey in Europe).

PAUL.—Aged 49, on his second great missionary journey.

INTRODUCTION.—In our last lesson we saw Paul and Silas cast into prison because they had interfered with the bad business of bad men by healing a poor slave girl. In this lesson we find them in the inner dungeon, with their feet in the stocks, in too-much pain to sleep.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—26. The doors opened.... hands loosed.—Not directly by the earthquake, which could not shake off chains, but by the power that brought the earthquake. 27. Would have killed himself.—Because he would be subject to imprisonment or death if the prisoners escaped. 30. What must I do to be saved?—Not from Roman punishment, for he was already saved from that, the prisoners not having escaped; but from the guilt and punishment of his sins. He probably had heard of Paul's teaching, in connection with the events just passed. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.—Belief not only of the head, but of the heart. Faith saves (1) by accepting God's promises of salvation; (2) by receiving Christ as our teacher and leader; (3) it fills the heart with love of God and of Jesus, which makes us hate sin; (4) it makes us live as if spiritual and

eternal things were real and true. 33. He took them, etc.—The jailer's nature was changed by his faith. 35. The magistrates sent, etc.—They had heard of the earthquake, and were afraid, or they saw, on second thought, that there was no justice in keeping them in prison. 37. Being Romans.—Paul was a Roman citizen by inheritance, and it was a very grave offence the magistrates had committed. Come themselves.—To show to all Philippi that these Christian teachers were good men, and not wicked.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Paul and Silas in prison—Songs in the night—The jailer about to kill himself—Why he trembled—The jailer's question—Paul's answer—How faith saves—The change in the jailer—Paul a Roman citizen—The release.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTION.—In what city were Paul and Silas? How came they to be in prison? How were they situated there?

SUBJECT.—WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

I. THE GREAT QUESTION (vs. 25-30).—What were Paul and Silas doing while in prison? How could they sing praises when in such pain? Are there any circumstances when we cannot find something to be thankful for? Why is thankfulness in trouble better than murmuring? How did their prayer and praise do good? How is good done by those who trust and praise the Lord in sickness and trouble? Who followed their praises? How did this affect the jailer? Why did he intend to commit suicide? How did Paul assure him? Why did the jailer tremble? Would all men tremble for their sins if they felt the power of God? What is it to be converted of sin? What question did the jailer ask? Saved from what? From what do we need to be saved? (Matt. 1. 21; Rom. 5. 9; John 3. 16, 17.) Why is this question, till it is answered, the most important question of life? Have you asked this question in earnest?

II. THE QUESTION ANSWERED (vs. 31, 32).—What was Paul's answer to the question? What is it to believe on Christ? How does faith in Christ save us from sin? (1 John 3. 9.) How does it save us from the punishment of sin? (Repeat the promises.) In what way did Paul strengthen the faith of the jailer?

III. THE FRUITS OF BELIEVING IN JESUS (vs. 33-40).—(1) In the jailer. What act showed that the jailer was made better by his faith? Does religion always make us more loving and tender? How did the jailer confess his faith? How was his family benefited by it? What made them rejoice? (2) In Paul. What offer of release was made? What led the magistrates to do this? Why would not Paul accept it? When shall Christians insist on their rights? Of what had the magistrates been guilty? Where did Paul and Silas go after they were set free? How many fruits of faith do you find in Paul in this lesson?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. We can proclaim the Gospel wherever we are. 2. Christ in us can give us peace and joy under the most trying circumstances. 3. In trouble it is far better and happier to sing praises than to murmur. 4. A praising heart in the night is the harbinger of the morning. 5. God is mightier than kings or prisons. 6. Contrast Paul singing, and the jailer wanting to kill himself. 7. The great question, What shall I do to be saved? 8. The answer—that of Paul. 9. True faith is manifested in changed character and life.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert.)

6. What did Paul do in prison? Ans. He prayed and sang praises. 7. What followed? Ans. A great earthquake, the prison doors opened, the prisoners' bonds loosed. 8. What did the jailer do? Ans. He came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas. 9. What question did he ask? Ans. Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 10. What was Paul's answer? Repeat the Golden Text. 11. What was the result? Ans. The jailer was converted, and Paul and Silas released.

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