



LESSON.—SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1909.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Closing Scenes.

Acts xxi., 1-17. Memory verses 13, 14.

Golden Text.

The will of the Lord be done. Acts xxi., 14.

Home Readings.

Monday, September 6.—Acts xxi., 1-17.
 Tuesday, September 7.—Acts vi., 1-7.
 Wednesday, September 8.—Acts xi., 22-30.
 Thursday, September 9.—Mark viii., 31-38.
 Friday, September 10.—Luke vi., 17-23.
 Saturday, September 11.—Luke xviii., 28-34.
 Sunday, September 12.—Phil. i., 12-21.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Who remembers what our last Sunday's lesson was about? About Paul's saying good-by to his dear friends at Ephesus. Was he going on a very pleasant trip to have a summer holiday like so many of us have had so lately? No, he was going to Jerusalem where he had a great many enemies and where he had been warned that he would be put into chains and into prison. Why then, do you think he was so earnest about going? He felt God wanted him to go, and he wanted to go wherever God wanted him to go. So as soon as his ship was ready he got on board and they sailed away. Do you remember one person who was with Paul now all the time? It was a doctor, Luke, who was a very dear friend of Paul's, and it was this very Luke who wrote the story we are studying to-day. He remembered all about that voyage that he took with Paul, and tells us the names of the different places he stopped at. A great many of these places were very interesting but Paul didn't want to stop and look at any of them. But at one place the ship they were on had to stop for seven days, so Paul and his friends got off and went on shore to see some of the Christians there.

FOR THE SENIORS.

That 'God and one is a majority' was proved by Paul on this trip to Jerusalem. He was certain that God was with him, therefore all the persuasions of friends and the plottings of enemies could not convince him that the journey to Jerusalem was unwise. His mission was to draw together the two branches of the Christian church, Jewish and Gentile, and he had in his charge the collection that had been made in Europe and Asia for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. Both these duties might have been delegated to others, but he could not divest himself of the feeling that it was God's will that he should go himself. As the end came in sight and still the prophecies were only of bonds and imprisonment, the thought of what the apostle might have to suffer so worked on the minds of even his immediate party that they joined the general chorus of dissuasion, but without avail. They might break the loving heart of the apostle by their grief, but they could not break his firm determination to follow the guiding hand of God, lead where He might. The resignation of his friend in saying 'the will of the Lord be done' serves to prove that they acknowledged Paul to be led by God, although in their loving solicitude they had previously taken the warnings of bonds and imprisonment to mean that Paul should not go on up to Jerusalem. This return of the apostle to Syria and the coming into touch again with the old places and names well known in the earlier history of the church, Philip (Acts vi., 5; viii., 5-40), Agabus (Acts xi., 27, 28), James, is of great interest. Paul

is returning not only to the scenes of his early labors but to those scenes of his earlier enmity to Christ and the church. Bonds and imprisonment in Jerusalem would bring to his mind more than the thought of his own future sufferings (Acts viii., 3; ix., 1, 2). However, he entered the city in no foolish spirit of bravado, and his attempt to avoid all offense was marked. There was nothing of the rash or foolhardy about St. Paul.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE')

Verse 3.—'The ship was to unlade her burden.' To the skipper's eye cargo was the important thing; the little Jew passenger and his company were of small account. How blind we are, and how little we know what is great and what is small! How trivial material interests swell themselves out and loom large! How astonished that sailor would have been if he had been told that his passenger was the most important man in the world at that moment, and that his vessel would be remembered forever because that Jew had trod her deck! Alexander Maclaren, in 'Expositions of the Book of Acts.'

Verse 12.—When Robert Moffatt went to Cape Town on his way to Namaqualand, he was there urged to give up his vain attempt to convert those savages. The government at Cape Town had offered \$500 for the arrest or death of a Hottentot chief called Africaner, who with several hundred followers was the terror of the Dutch farmers in that section. He would certainly be killed, his skin would be used for drum-heads, his skull for a drinking-cup. 'Were you an old man, it would not matter, for you would soon have died anyway,' one kindly old woman told him, 'but you are so young, and you are going to be a prey to that monster!' Like Paul, Moffatt persisted in his purpose, and a year later he took Africaner with him to Cape Town to show the government officials that they need no longer fear him, as he had become a Christian.

Verse 13.—'I am ready to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.' What do you think is the characteristic word for the description of Paul? Mr. Spurgeon said the word was 'ready,' 'Paul the Ready.' You know what he said to the people at Rome: 'I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.' It was the position of peril, but he was ready, ready for service. And in the letter that he wrote to Timothy, writing it as an old and broken man in a damp dungeon and in darkness, he said, 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.'—W. W. More, in 'Record of Christian Work.'

Verse 15.—'We went up to Jerusalem.' Never had Paul gone to Jerusalem without a heart full of emotion—neither in those early years, when he came an enthusiastic boy from Tarsus to the school of Gamaliel—nor on his return from Damascus, after the greatest change that could have passed over an inquisitor's mind,—nor when he went with Barnabas from Antioch to the Council, which was to decide an anxious controversy. Now he went to Jerusalem calmly and resolutely, though doubtful of his reception among the Christian brethren, and not knowing what would happen on the morrow.—Conybeare and Howson, in 'Life and Epistle of St. Paul.'

We are not right until we can pray heartily, nor say submissively, 'Thy will be done!'—George Macdonald.

I find the doing of the will of God leaves no time for disputing about His plans.—George Macdonald.

The man who spreads depression and breeds discouragement ought to be ostracized.—Lyman Abbott.

Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. I. Cor. xv., 58.

None are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends who care more for our comfort than for our character.—A. B. Bruce.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, September 12.—Topic—Contented all the time. Phil. iv., 11, 12.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, September 6.—Self-repression. Rom. xiii., 11-14.

Tuesday, September 7.—Denial of lawful things. Matt. v., 29, 30.

Wednesday, September 8.—Excess is slavery. I. Cor. vi., 9-20.

Thursday, September 9.—Dangers of excess. Jude 10-16.

Friday, September 10.—Sober advice. Tit. ii., 2-12.

Saturday, September 11.—Using, not abusing. I. Cor. vii., 22-24, 29-31.

Sunday, September 12.—Topic—Temperance in all things. I. Cor. ix., 23-27.

Religious News.

The recently compiled statistics of the Y. M. C. A. shows that there are now 7,822 Associations with 821,209 members, 2,973 employed secretaries, physical, educational, boys' industrial and special directors. The employment of trained secretaries is largely responsible for the Association's growth in America. While Germany has the largest number of Associations (1,990), and North America has 1,939, the members of the German branches number 117,682, and of the American 446,032. The Germans have 131 secretaries, and the Americans, 2,476; the Germans 135 buildings worth \$2,400,000; America has property worth over \$40,000,000. The Y. M. C. A. now has branches in every country on earth and in nearly every large city, commercial center and seaport, having more than doubled its membership and organizations in the Orient in the past few years.

The Student Volunteer Movement seems to have a deepening hold upon the student body of the country. 'The Intercollegian' for March gives the names of 379 volunteers for work in the foreign field, 326 of whom had sailed during 1908. These volunteers are connected with forty-seven missionary agencies, and are to be found working in Africa, China, India, Burma, Japan, Corea, South America, Turkey, Alaska, Philippines, West Indies, Mexico and Arabia. The total number who have sailed since the movement began is 3,861. These missionaries are connected with the Volunteer Movement, but it must not be supposed for a moment that they are the only volunteers. Many others are just as truly volunteers, although not connected with this body.

The president of the National Temperance Society assures us that half of America is now 'dry.' There is little doubt that the people are becoming aroused to the enormity of the drink evil, and this is nowhere more clearly seen than in the 'coercive prohibition' exercised by many large corporations. We quote from the report of the National Temperance Society in this connection: 'It is encouraging to observe that the great industries also are beginning to realize the importance of a proper attitude toward the drink habit. Our leading railroads are passing aggressive laws against tipping employees. Many of them have issued orders declaring that employees must not touch liquor off duty any more than on duty, under peril of immediate dismissal.'—Episcopal Recorder.

A number of British officials in India have borne witness to the character and ability of missionaries in that great portion of the British Empire. The latest, perhaps, is that of Sir Andrew Fraser, late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who in an address before the great 'Missions in India' meeting in London recently said:

I have served in two provinces, and I have known as many missionaries as possible in both. I have gone in commissions under government over the whole of India, and visited every province and many native states, and in every place I have become acquainted with the missionaries. I claim for a layman an exceptional right to speak in regard to missions. I throw myself with all my weight into the class of witnesses who come to speak with thankfulness to God of what they have seen in the past, and hopefulness in regard to the future.

Sunday School Offer.

Any school in Canada that does not take the 'Messenger' may have it supplied free on trial for three weeks on request of Superintendent, Secretary or Pastor, stating the number of copies required.