

Paul at Corinth.

MARCH 9.

ACTS XVIII: 1-17.

Golden Text, Acts 18: 10.

CORINTH, forty-five miles from Athens, was the commercial and political capital of Greece, finely situated on the isthmus. It was adorned with magnificent temples and theatres; towering above all was the temple of Venus on a rocky eminence 2,000 feet above the sea. The city was noted for learning, wealth and wickedness. Its population was about 100,000, many being Jews. Its glory has long since passed away; its site is now a desolate pile of ruins. Through the agency of St. Paul this dissolute city became an important centre of Christianity. Vs. 2, 3. *Aquila and Priscilla*, natives of *Pontus*—the most easterly province in Asia Minor—had been living for some time in Rome, but, being obliged to leave, they found a temporary asylum in Corinth, where they carried on their business of tent-making. Every Jew was obliged to learn some trade. With these good people Paul lodged, working with them at his trade to pay for his board. They soon became great friends, Rom. 16: 3; 1 Cor. 16: 19. When he left Corinth they accompanied him, v. 8, and helped him in his work, v. 26. Priscilla was one of the pioneers of those women-workers who have done and are still doing so much for Christianity. V. 4. How diligent Paul was! Omitting no opportunity of discoursing on the great theme of Christ and the resurrection. V. 5. *Silas* came from Berea, ch. 17: 13, 14, and Timotheus from Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 3: 2. *Pressed in the spirit*—"constrained by the word," R. V.—may mean that he felt himself under special obligation to preach the word, 1 Cor. 9: 16, or he may refer to some inward pressure, or discouragement, 1 Cor. 2: 1-3; 1 Thess. 3: 1-10. The arrival of these brethren would revive his drooping spirits. V. 7. *Departed*—ceased to attend the synagogue services. Still boarding with Aquila, he obtained a room in the house of Justus, where he could hold his meetings. V. 8. Another household baptism. The conversion of Crispus was considered so important that Paul, contrary to his custom, baptized him, 1 Cor. 1: 14-16. *Many of the Corinthians* i. e., of the idolaters, in addition to the Jews already mentioned. Vs. 9-10. Like many other teachers, Paul was afraid he was doing very little good—so few conversions and opposition so strong! But these gracious words would bring him both comfort and courage—"I have much people"—Though idolaters now, many of them were already elected to become believers. There is a valuable lesson here for all Christian workers—Toil on, and leave results with God, 1 Kings 19: 18; Rom. 11: 1-5. V. 11. During this time was written the epistles to the Thessalonians. Vs. 12-17. *Gallio*—was non-committal to a fault in witnessing with stoical indifference the assault upon Sosthenes—*cared for none of these things*—these disorderly proceedings. His line of conduct however, favoured Paul's cause, enabling him to speak boldly, vs. 9, 10.

The Coming of the Lord.

MARCH 16.

1 THESS. IV.: 13-18; v. 1-8.

Golden Text, 1 Thess. 4: 14.

THIS epistle was written at Corinth about A.D. 52, soon after the arrival of Silas and Timotheus, Acts 18: 5. It is the earliest of Paul's writings extant, and follows last lesson in Chronological sequence. The church at Thessalonica was in many respects a model one, ch. 1: 7. It had suffered persecution, ch. 2: 14; but, like most new converts its members were somewhat unsettled in their minds—giving way to doubts and difficulties about the resurrection and the future state. This letter was designed for their encouragement and counsel, and ours. It is written in the joint names of Paul, Silas, and Timotheus, the three founders of the Thessalonian Church ch. 1: 1. V. 13. *I would not, should be we*—my fellow labourers and myself. *Ignorant*—There is much about the future state respecting which we are, and must continue ignorant. Death itself is a great mystery. The life beyond is very imperfectly understood. But God has revealed some consolatory truths which we ought to consider concerning them which are asleep—Beautiful imagery! Death does not annihilate. The cemetery is literally a *sleeping place*. Many had misunderstood Paul's teaching; as though he confined the future glory to those who should be found alive at Christ's coming. The sorrow here spoken of is immoderate grieving for the dead. *As others*—the heathen who had no hope beyond the grave. V. 14. Faith in Christ is the test of our religion. The fact of Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours. V. 15. *Word of the Lord*—by revelation. *We which remain*—those of us who may live to witness this event. Believers are taught to live in continued expectation of their Lord's coming. Luke 12: 40. *Prevent*—precede, or enter glory before the righteous dead. Vs. 16, 17. *Shall rise first*—before the living are changed. *Then we*—Christ's people who are alive, after having been changed, shall join those who have been raised. 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52. *Ever with the Lord*—Precious thought! No more partings; no more sorrow; no more tears; Rev. 21: 4. Ch. V. Reference is here made (1) to the certainty of Christ's second coming; (2) as to how we should prepare for it. *No need* for the apostle to dwell on the first, which he had distinctly taught them by word of mouth. V. 2. *The day of the Lord*—that great day of Christ's coming to judge the world—Matt. 24: 36-44. V. 3. *They shall say*—the children of the world—like people living under the shadow of a volcanic mountain, not dreaming of the destruction that may await them at any moment. Vs. 4, 5. *Not in darkness*—the Gospel had been preached to them. They had the light of revelation. Vs. 6, 7. *Sleep*—here means apathy to spiritual things. *Others*—the unconverted. *Watch*—it behoves christians ever to be vigilant, so to live as to be always prepared to meet their Lord. Luke 21: 34-36.