

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Pelonbets' Notes.

Second Quarter, 1902.

APRIL TO JUNE.

Lesson XI. June 15. Acts 16:6-15.

PAUL CROSSES TO EUROPE.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou shalt be his witness unto all men.

—Acts 22:15.

EXPLANATORY.

I. PLANNING FOR THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR.—Acts 15:35-41. After their return from the Jerusalem visit described in our last lesson, Paul and Barnabas remained some time in the Syrian Antioch. Then Paul proposed to Barnabas that they revisit the churches which they had founded in Asia Minor during their first missionary tour (A. D. 45-48.) He would visit his spiritual children to see how they were growing in grace. Barnabas was quite ready to go. But when they began to form their plans of campaign, a practical question arose. Barnabas wished to take with them his relative John Mark. But Paul was unwilling to risk taking with them as a helper one who had left them in the lurch in the midst of their first journey. Each one was so decided in his own judgment that they agreed to separate.

PAUL REVISITS THE CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR.—Acts 15:41; 16:1-5. According to the best manuscripts accepted by the R. V., v. 34 of chap. 15 is omitted, and it is understood that Silas returned to Jerusalem before he went on the missionary tour with Paul. They were to meet in Asia Minor, as the narrative implies at v. 4, where "they" is first used. Paul therefore started alone from Antioch, by land along the road leading north, and then turning west to Tarsus. Here they struck the great Roman road through the Cilician gates, the pass through the Taurus mountains to Derbe and Lystra, and afterwards to Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia.

III. THE CALL TO A WIDER FIELD.—Vs. 6-10. By this time Silas had joined Paul and Timothy. 6. PHRYGIA AND THE REGION OF GALATIA. The better reading is that of the R. V. "the region of Phrygia and Galatia," that is, the Phrygo-Galatic country, "ethnically Phrygian, and politically Galatian," that part of the Phrygian race which belonged to the Galatian province. Galatia is Gaulatia, the country of the Gauls or Kelts. AND WERE FORBIDDEN. It is not said in what way they were forbidden, whether by inward monitions, by vision or other divine communication, or by some providence as a political disturbance. Very possibly the command came in more ways than one, each confirming the other. TO PREACH THE WORD IN ASIA. They had now come within the province of Asia, the western province of Asia Minor, which included Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, and the cities Ephesus, Smyrna, and Sardis, and the others of the seven churches of Asia, but they were forbidden to preach there.

7. "They therefore kept to the north across Asian Phrygia with the intention of entering the adjoining province of Bithynia, but when they were come to (opposite) MYRIA, and ASSAYED (were attempting) TO GO ON TO ASIA INTO BITHYNIA, THE SPIRIT OF JESUS SUFFERED THEM NOT."

8. AND THEY PASSING BY MYRIA, "Neglecting Mysia, that is, passing through it without preaching." They passed along Mysia, skirting it on the southern portion. "The words cannot mean 'passing by without entering.' " Troas could not be reached without crossing Mysia." CAME DOWN TO TROAS. A seaport in the same district as Homer's Troy, but farther south. On a later occasion Paul left his cloak, books, and parchments there (2 Tim. 4:13).

9. AND A VISION, that which is seen, a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy or trance or sleep. THERE STOOD A MAN OF MACEDONIA, recognized as from Macedonia by his dress, or by his words "come over," etc. Ramsay, as Renan, thinks it was a vision of Luke whom Paul had previously known, and whom in his vision he recognized as his old physician and acquaintance who had some connection with Philippi, and whom Paul had met before somewhere in his travels. It is plain from the "we" in v. 10, that Paul found Luke at Troas. Macedonia lay to the north of Greece. Thessalonica was its capital. "It had numerous flourishing cities, of which Philippi, Thessalonica, Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Berea are mentioned in the Acts. It now constitutes a part of Turkey, and notwithstanding the oppression of the Turks, Christianity, though in a poor condition, exists to this day." PRAYED HIM. "Beseeching him." CAME OVER INTO MACEDONIA, AND HELP US. "The form of the vision is striking. It does not come

in the shape of a command from Christ, but in that of a petition from man."

10. IMMEDIATELY WE ENDEAVOURED (sought means) TO GO. Paul's answer to the call was earnest and instant. ASSUREDLY GATHERING, from the various and persistent intimations, by providence, the Holy Spirit, and visions, and the finding of a new helper in Luke the good physician.

IV. FOUNDING OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN EUROPE.—Vs. 11-15. The "we" sections, one beginning with vs. 10, "are introduced for the definite purpose of marking the writer's presence with St. Paul." "They" is used again when the company leave Philippi, and the "we" section begins again at Philippi in Acts 20:5-6.

The Journey. 11. SAMOTHRACIA was an island in the Aegean, on the Thracian coast, about sixty miles in an air-line from Troas, the highest point, except Mt. Athos, in this part of the Aegean, and a familiar landmark to sailors. THE NEXT DAY TO NEAPOLIS. "New city," the same word as "Naples." It was the seaport of Philippi, about seventy-five miles from Samothracia in an air-line.

Philippi. 12. THENCE TO PHILIPPI. About ten miles from Neapolis, on the river Gangites, named after Philip of Macedon, who built the city. Near it were famous old mines. It has long since disappeared. THE CHIEF CITY. Either the first of the district, to which they came, or the leading city of that part of the district, not of the whole of Macedonia.

The Conversion of Lydia. 13. WE WENT OUT OF THE CITY GATES. Probably there was no synagogue in the city. WHERE PRAYER WAS WONT (accustomed) TO BE MADE. R. V., "Where we supposed there was a place of prayer." "That the riverside should be chosen as the place of resort was very natural for the purpose of the Levitical washings." AND SPAKE UNTO THE WOMEN WHICH RESORTED THITHER. "It is noticeable that in the three Macedonian towns, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, women are especially mentioned as influenced by the apostles' labors, and, as in the case of Lydia, the women of Philippi occupied a position of considerable freedom and social influence."

14. NAMED LYDIA, or a Lydian. Lydia was a common name among the Greeks and Romans. A SELLER OF PURPLE. "Either of the coloring matter, or more likely, with the fabric already dyed. The purple color, so esteemed in the ancient world, included many tints." "Lydia was evidently a person of some means, as capital would be required for the trade in so costly a material."

"Lydia would thus be able to help Paul in his trial." OF THE CITY OF THYATIRA. The city of Thyatira, on the confines of Lydia and Mysia, and one of the seven churches of Asia addressed in the Apocalypse, was celebrated in very early days for its purple dyes and purple fabrics.

WHICH WORSHIPPED GOD. Who was truly religious, perhaps a Jewish proselyte. She was thus prepared for further light. "To him that hath shall be given." WHOSE HEART THE LORD OPENED, i. e., in conformity with other passages (Matt. 11:25, 29; Luke 24:45; 1 Cor. 3:6, 7), enlightened, impressed by his Spirit, made willing.

AND WHEN SHE WAS BAPTIZED. As soon as she believed, she made a public profession of her faith in the appointed way,—by baptism. There is not much depth to that faith and love which does not desire openly to confess our Lord and Saviour in the way of his own appointment. Primitive piety was not hidden piety. AND HER HOUSEHOLD. "Whether we are to understand by this term her children, her slaves, or the work people engaged in the manual employment connected with her trade, or all these collectively, cannot easily be decided." "We do not know whether she had children, or even was married." IF WE HAVE JUDGED ME TO BE FAITHFUL. Then prove it, and reward me by coming into my house, making it their home. SHE CONSTRAINED US, she used (moral) force.

THE OVERBURDENED.

The Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, the author of "In His Steps," gives in The Christian Endeavor World the following practical suggestion for church work: "Other things being equal, my experience seems to prove that one of the difficulties confronting the average preacher is the tendency in any church for a few people to be doing too many things. A few women are doing all the missionary work. A few select people are doing all the teaching in the Sunday School. A few people are bearing the heaviest burdens of expense."

"It is something like the athletics in the average college today. A select number

of the brawniest, most muscular men of endurance fill up the football and baseball teams, and the rest of the college pays an entrance fee to go in and see them exercise but do practically nothing else."

"There are churches where the same set of people teach in the Sunday School, do mission work, temperance work, and Endeavor work."

"Now, this is not a fair division of labor and I have come to the point where I feel like saying to my people, 'Do one thing, and practically one thing. If you teach in the Sunday School, I will not ask you to do anything else in the way of definite work, unless, of course, you feel strong enough and able to do more. If you are fitted for the Christian Endeavor work, do that with all your might. I do not ask the same worker to work in the Sunday School. If you can do special temperance work, make a specialty of it, and we will not ask you to work in the Sunday-school or Endeavor Society. If you are gifted in the way of music, make a specialty of that, and we will not ask you to work in Tennessee town.'"

"If every member of a church has something definite to do besides going to church and paying something towards the support of the church, the work will be better done if distributed through the membership, each one doing his own part that he can best do, than if a few are bearing all the burdens. A simple solution of the problem of work in the church seems to be mapping out some clear, definite programme for the church, and then letting each one do the work that he is best fitted to do, and it goes without saying that the best workers in any church are volunteers."

Weak and Helpless.

THE CONDITION OF MRS. WM. WESTCOTT, OF SEAFORTH.

Suffered from Headaches and Dizziness—
Could Not Stand the Least Exertion.

From the Sun, Seaforth, Ont.

Mrs. Wm. Westcott is well known to nearly all the residents of Seaforth. It is also well known to her neighbors and friends that she passed through a trying illness, but is now happily in robust health. To the editor of the Sun, Mrs. Westcott recently gave the particulars of her case for publication, merely in the hope that her experience might be of some benefit to some other sufferer. She said: "For some time past my health was in a bad state, my whole system being badly run down. I was troubled with headache, much dizziness, my appetite was poor and I could not stand the least exertion. I consulted different physicians, but their treatment did not seem to benefit me, and I gradually became so bad that I was unable to attend to my household duties. I then tried several advertised medicines, but without any beneficial results, and I began to despair of getting better. One of my neighbors strongly advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and somewhat reluctantly I consented to do so. After I had taken the second box I began to note a great improvement in my condition, and by the time I had used five boxes I was fully restored to my former good health, much to the surprise of my neighbors and relations. I do not suffer the least now from those headaches and dizzy spells; my appetite is good and I can attend to my household duties with the greatest ease. In fact I feel like a different woman, and all this I can say is due to the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. All who suffer from a rundown constitution should give these pills a trial."

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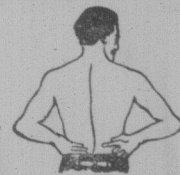
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