

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. Going to the place of prayer at Philippi, Paul and his companions were met by a demoniac slave girl, who followed them crying out who they were. This she repeated many days and Paul unable longer to bear the annoyance and pitying the poor girl who was the helpless victim of Satan, turned and cast out the evil spirit. When her masters saw that she could no longer tell fortunes for them, they were enraged against the missionaries. The rescue of a soul was nothing to them compared with the loss of their profits. So they accused Paul and Silas before the magistrates of breaking the law in that, being Jews, they intruded themselves into the city, and taught unlawful practices. Jews were objects of great aversion to the Romans and it was easy to rouse the mob against them—Time A. D. 52.

LESSON PLAN, I. Suffering for Christ vs. 22-24. II. Rejoicing in Tribulation vs. 25-28. III. Pointing to Christ. vs. 29-34.

22. And the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates rent off their clothes (R. V. rent their garments off them), and commanded to beat them (R. V. beat them with rods). They were dragged by an excited mob into the market place where the magistrates held court. There was no pretence of a trial. The lictors or constables, were ordered to strip off the prisoners' clothes and beat them with their rods (II. Thess. 2: ?). They yielded to a mob that they could not control.

23. And when they had laid many stripes upon them they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. There was no legal limit to the number of stripes that might be laid on, and with the crowd to urge them the lictors were not likely to be merciful.

24. Who having received such a charge thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. Their cell was probably cold, dark, damp and underground. The stocks were two heavy wooden planks fastened edge to edge. The feet were secured between these by notches in the edges, which closed around the ankles when the planks were brought together. The prisoners could only sit with their bleeding backs against the cold stone wall.

25. And at midnight (R. V. but about midnight) Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises (R. V. were praying and singing hymns) to God, and the prisoners heard them (R. V. were listening to them). Sleep being out of the question they cured their pain with praise. They doubtless sang the Psalms of David, many of which would

be very suitable to their circumstances and would combine prayer and praise. The words imply that the other prisoners were listening with wonder and delight.

26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed. Earthquakes were common in that locality, but this one was unusually violent. It was sent as God's attestation of his servants. Bolted doors were opened and the prisoners' chains unfastened. This was more than an ordinary earthquake could have done.

27. And the keeper of the prison awaking (R. V. being roused) out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. If the prisoners had escaped he was liable to suffer their penalty for them (I. Kings 20: 39, 40; II. Kings 10: 24).

28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm for we are all here. The same power which loosed their bonds restrained the prisoners from escaping.

29. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling and fell down (R. V. trembling for fear fell) before Paul and Silas. He was terror stricken. This was the remorse of a guilty conscience brought face to face with God.

30. And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? He addresses them with the profoundest respect. The answer shows what kind of salvation he wanted.